

HENRY MERRITT

ART-CRITICISM

AND ROMANCE

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HENRY MERRITT

VOL. I.



HENRY MERRITT

ART CRITICISM AND ROMANCE

WITH RECOLLECTIONS, AND 23 ETCHINGS

BY ANNA LEA MERRITT



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THOSE who had opportunities of knowing how large an amount of picture restoration Mr. Merritt undertook, and how conscientiously and thoroughly he performed it, will probably be surprised to learn that he was, during the latter part of his life, a most active contributor to several journals, and that his collected writings of this kind are sufficient in bulk to represent the product of a life-long activity rather than a mere interlude to graver and more congenial employment. Besides these labours, which for the most part have merely an ephemeral value, and which, as will be seen, suffer from undue pressure of time as well as from other disadvantages, he has left at least two works, of a totally distinct character, which establish his claim to an original and most valuable vein of genius. By his occasional writings he succeeded in exercising a steady influence upon contemporary art, while his more imaginative works place him in the front rank of those who by the warm light of genius have made the life of the poor vivid and real to the imaginations of all.

The principal works of the latter kind which he has

left, and which are printed in these volumes, are two stories, the earlier of which, 'Robert Dalby,' has already been published anonymously, and with very considerable success, though it has now long been out of print. The later story, 'The Oxford Professor and the Harpist,' which was left by him in manuscript, still wanting the final touches which only the author could have given it, is now printed for the first time in this collection.

In the same vein is the smaller sketch, called 'A Story of a Flower,' which originally appeared in Mr. Ruskin's 'Fors Clavigera,' and is by his permission reprinted.

To all three of these works a special interest attaches from the fact that they are very largely autobiographical. Indeed, 'Robert Dalby' is substantially an account of the experiences of the author's earlier life, in which he has changed very little besides names and the order of events, having however adopted as a personal experience of the hero some few circumstances which had from other causes become vividly real to the imagination of the author. When this story was published, in spite of certain characteristics peculiarly calculated to prove stumbling-blocks to the critical intelligence, it at once arrested the attention of a wide circle both of reviewers and readers. The defects were obvious enough : a certain lack of continuity, method, and proportion in the arrangement of the story, especially in the falling off of the interest towards the end, where it should culminate ; an occasional roughness of expression, ill-calculated for an over-sensitive ear ; and finally, a certain direct and

uncouth originality of presentment which would give pause to such critics as judged by a conventional standard. On the other hand, all who read the story with sympathy and intelligence, to whom substance was more important than form, and imagination than polish, could not fail to find in it a true and refined pathos, a note of genuine poetry in the reticent simplicity of the language such as made the very roughnesses of expressions count only as the stamp of unconventional truth and of actual experience.

When the story appeared, many of its critics compared it to the works of Defoe. To draw such a parallel was perhaps as high and as truly appreciative a compliment as could well be paid it ; and yet in some respects it fell short of rather than exceeded the truth. To my mind Merritt's work stands before that of other chroniclers of the 'Simple Annals of the Poor' by all the interval which we might expect to find between actual experience working on a mind of warm imagination and genuine sympathy, and the very highest efforts of genius upon a theme remote from actual contact.

It would perhaps be still more in favour of the author of 'Robert Dalby' to compare his work with that of contemporary writers of fiction who have dealt with similar themes. Our own time has been prolific of efforts to bridge the gulf between the educated and those who from want of knowledge are inarticulate, and to bring them on the scene to tell their own story. Such figures vary upwards in the scale of verisimilitude from the

conventional peasant whose fully developed powers of thought and of expression are hampered only by the conditions of rustic dialect. But of the best works in this field, so far as our national authors are concerned, I know of none which brings home to us the pathos of humble life without giving rise to some degree of scepticism that the figures are puppets on an artificial stage.

With 'Robert Dalby' no such suspicion occurs. The descriptions are as simple as they are complete; the dialogues command instant and absolute belief, while they are often more deeply pathetic in their briefness and simplicity than the most impassioned utterances. Witness, for example, the conversation in the hospital between the old men who are making up a kit for Robert Dalby after he has fallen among thieves; or that between 'Ben' and 'Mother Jones,' when the former returns from long imprisonment and finds his sweetheart dead. It is this utter truthfulness which is the chief charm of the story; and it was for this that the author mainly valued his own work. I shall never forget a certain evening, now years ago, which I spent in Merritt's rooms with a few congenial friends, when one of the party, an accomplished writer and critic, read aloud some manuscript of our host's in which scenes of this kind are described, and at the end of one pathetic episode, which he could scarcely finish for emotion, the reader threw down the papers with an exclamation: 'By ——, Merritt, it's the best thing in the English language!' and the author,

crying like a child at the pathos of his own creation and at the sympathetic emotion it caused in the hearers, could only blurt out, 'I swear it's true; I swear every word of it is true.' So, too, he would tell his friends countless stories, never, alas! committed to writing, in which the obvious truthfulness of the narration was only equalled by the beautiful tact, the tact of a genuine artist, with which he brought out the points of the tales—tales often of vice and squalor through which shone some ray of pure human tenderness most lovingly portrayed, and which forced the hearer to recognise how the dark places of the earth are redeemed by sympathy and love.

Truthfulness, however, though the most prominent, is by no means the only special charm of Merritt's writing. The reader will scarcely fail to notice his extreme sensitiveness to impressions of the utmost subtlety, such as few minds could consciously perceive, much less represent in words.

As an instance, I would call attention to the chapter called 'An Order for the Hangman,' and to the consummate art with which the entire atmosphere of the narrative is coloured in harmony with the gloomy object of the boy's walk. Here is a touch of no common kind: 'The farmer for whom the rope on my shoulder was intended was a remarkably clean man, with white hair, and when I beheld him in the court he wore a neck-cloth white as snow. Considerately enough, when I would have rested the rope upon the soddened ground,

I was deterred from doing so by the remembrance of this fact, and exerted myself in order to avoid soiling the rope.'

As an example of the quality of reticence which excludes all superfluous and extravagant touches, I may mention such an idyll as 'The Pauper's Funeral.' But it is hard and almost unjust to select for special praise from a number of scenes, each complete in its own special light and colour. Indeed, the whole story is a chaplet of gems, indifferently strung it is true, but unrivalled in their pure and genuine simplicity.

'The Oxford Professor and the Harpist,' which is published for the first time in these volumes, has mainly the same merits and the same defects as its predecessor. They are, however, blended in a less favourable proportion, principally for two reasons. The first is that many of the phases of life herein described were less intimately known to the writer than those in which 'Robert Dalby' moves; the second, and perhaps the more vital disadvantage under which it labours, is that the work never received the final recasting by the author's hand, which it greatly needs. Both stories turn to a large extent upon Oxford life; but while the earlier story has chiefly to do with events outside the University, of which certain figures appear merely incidentally, 'The Oxford Professor and the Harpist' is a story of University life, a theme which required a more intimate knowledge than the writer possessed. It is evident in reading these pages that, as we

know too from his personal history, the author's knowledge of the University was that of a town boy ; of one too who was acutely sensitive to the abuses and inequalities, both real and apparent, to which such an institution gave rise, as is shown in many of the occasional writings which he has left. For example, the Proctor is to him an irresponsible possessor of more than inquisitorial powers equally over town, undergraduate, and professor ; while his authority and power of espionage is not limited to the University town or neighbourhood, but pursues its victims into London itself.

It is scarcely surprising that this should have been the case, seeing that the limitation of the powers of its officers is a little puzzling even to those most versed in the life of the University ; puzzling perhaps sometimes to those in whom they are vested. And indeed, a study of the University from this point of view is both interesting and profitable, but is at the same time so unusual and leads to so many anomalies in the course of the story as to call for some indulgence from the reader.

Another point against the story is that the romantic interest turns upon a train of circumstances which, if not incredible, are at least strange, weird, and unattractive. The determination of the heroine to fulfil the last wishes of her father concerning his interment is noble, no doubt, but the conditions which it entails of the constant presence of the embalmed body during a number of years have the effect of creating an uncanny and ghoul-like atmosphere about her actions which tends to

alienate our taste, and through it our sympathy. This portion of the plot is, however, so closely interwoven in the action of the story, that I have found it impossible to eradicate, or even to modify it considerably, and have contented myself with softening down some of the more startling occurrences to which it gives rise.

I should wish therefore, frankly admitting the unpromising conditions under which the story labours, to ask of those who read it the fullest indulgence for the incomplete work of a hand that will write no more, confident that those who are able to discount those elementary defects will be amply repaid for their candour by many charming qualities in the work, such as the tenderly sympathetic delineation of the Professor, a kind of Dr. Primrose of Oxford life, whose unsuspecting generosity and high-minded chivalry make him the victim of the most transparent intrigue, while experience diminishes nothing of his trustfulness and simplicity ; such again as the beautiful descriptions of the local scenery with which the author's childhood had been so familiar ; principally perhaps by such episodes as the Oxford Professor and the Acrobats, which is equal to the very best of 'Robert Dalby.'

It has scarcely seemed to me worth while to call attention to some minor inaccuracies, which every reader will correct for himself. For instance, it will trouble geologists rather than the general reader that the author believes in a chalk formation in the immediate neighbourhood of Ravenna. (It is, by-the-bye, worth noticing

that the episode of Count Campo's interment seems to have been constructed upon some imperfect notions of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia). Nor does it much matter that he imagined the subject of Warton's Ode to have been the Cherwell, and not, as it was, the Isis. It is curious that he should have made the last hunt of the season coincident with the first frost, a combination which could only happen under very exceptional meteorological conditions. The mistake is, however, as excusable as that well-known one of the Oxford tutor, who recommended his pupils to get their hunting done in the long vacation ; far more pardonable than that of a some-time head-master of one of the public schools, who congratulated his boys on their self-restraint in giving up birds-nesting during the October quarter.

'A Story of a Flower,' reprinted from 'Fors Clavigera,' needs no comment of mine. It already has a higher *imprimatur* than the best I could give it. The occurrence is doubtless as true in fact as the description is genuine in sentiment, and of the quality of the writing I can only say that it is a gem which proved worthy of a setting which few could bear.

Mr. Merritt's critical writings are those of one who understood art in many of its aspects more thoroughly than any of his contemporaries. It might therefore have been expected that having the requisite knowledge, together with many charms of thought and style, he would have left much work in this field worth preserv-

ing. This, however, I have not found to be the case. Having gone completely through a very large amount of material of the kind, I have to admit that I can find very little which there is any advantage in preserving. Indeed nearly the whole of his critical work seems to have been calculated only for its immediate purpose, and is altogether at a lower level of literary attainment than the writings I have noticed above. The reason of this inequality is not far to seek. It lies in the conditions under which the work was produced ; conditions of which the writings themselves afford ample evidence. In the first place, it is clear that the greater portion of them was produced under great pressure of time. It would appear to be an established rule of the general instructor that, as soon as, or often sooner than, an exhibition of pictures is opened, a full account and judicious appraisal of the works therein exhibited should be placed before an impatient public, which will not be at the trouble of judging for itself ; and, as a consequence, the critic must dispense with the leisure necessary to mature his judgment and his words, and furnish in the hottest haste the necessary 'copy,' the quality of which is not to be studied at the expense of speed. In Merritt's case these ordinary conditions were complicated by two which are not universal—the first that he had another engrossing and far more important occupation ; the second, that he was too good-natured. His critical writings give ample proof that he was fully aware how many struggling artists, some with wives and families to feed, were, or thought

themselves, dependent for a chance of recognition on a few favourable words, no matter what. He knew too well by sad experience what struggling against poverty meant, and, having a most tender heart, did his best to benefit the largest number possible. Many of his critiques seem to be inspired by no motive but this, and are successful in their aim by the surprising ingenuity with which name after name is introduced with a favourable word of recognition. With a motive such as this, creditable as it is to the writer's character, it is no wonder that his writings fail of permanent value, and I have been compelled to content myself with reprinting only a few sketches of the lives of certain old masters, together with the whole of his criticisms on the pictures of the International Exhibition of 1872. None of these seem to have been written in undue haste; and the critiques, having mainly to do with the works of artists of established reputation, are not hampered by the dictates of the writer's good-nature. An additional reason for reproducing them is that, as the Exhibition marked an epoch in the history of modern art, its individual works are more likely to be remembered by the general reader than those of less important collections.

It is certainly disappointing to have to dismiss so much matter so briefly. The work is that of a man of especial and most accurate attainments, and notwithstanding this it seldom gives proof of any knowledge beyond the reach of the veriest dilettante. Much has been said lately both in condemnation and in defence

of art-criticism as a whole. Without entering on so large a question we may at least conclude that, under conditions which bring competence and ignorance to a common level, it cannot be a very profitable means of public instruction.

Of the author himself it is not my province to say much. This has been done with perfect tact and most graphic fidelity by the one who is most entitled and most competent to speak of him. Still I may be allowed briefly to record the complete and harmonious impression which his personality, his technical work, and his imaginative writings have left upon my memory. In all of these the same characteristics are manifest: an utter sensitiveness to the most subtle impressions in nature and in art; a deeply-rooted tenderness for all that was simple and lovable in human life, for all that was beautiful in animals and in flowers; a quaint and graphic power of description, ordered by a consummate tact, which made the scenes and events he pictured as vivid as the reality, and grouped their details with a sense of fitness and proportion such as ruled the designs of the masters over whose works his life was mainly spent. How deeply and faithfully he has imbibed the spirit of the great artists whose works it was the principal occupation of his life to restore is known to all that had occasion to profit by his accomplished skill; and to the care and thoughtfulness with which his principles had been developed, his work 'Dirt and Pictures Separated' bears ample testimony. Even apart from the endorse-

ment which experience gave to his success in this walk of art in the high reputation which was generally accorded to him, his very temperament was a guarantee that he would lovingly and with utter self-abnegation follow out the thoughts and intentions of the masters, risking, with his characteristic reticence, to do too little rather than too much. Indeed the note of his work both in art and in literature is one and the same ; the truthfulness with which he followed out the impressions which he had faithfully conceived, without a superfluous or irrelevant touch.

It was his ambition from a very early age to be a painter of original pictures, and I believe the impression to have remained with him to the end of his life that, but for adverse circumstances which compelled him to do what came to hand rather than what was congenial to his taste, he would have found this to be the pursuit for which he was best fitted. Though I cannot doubt that his powers of mind and of hand would have insured him very considerable success as a painter, I am disposed to think that his more true calling lay rather in that acre of the field of art into which the roughness of circumstances forced him. Of the qualities of his mind none are more prominent than a certain passivity of receptiveness combined with an extreme refinement of perception. In his literary work, the best passages are nearly always those in which he describes actual experiences, finding in them innumerable features which would be lost on an average understanding. When a call

is made upon his power of original invention, or when his constructive faculty is put to the test, the result is usually less successful. In plastic art his powers were not to my knowledge made trial of to the same extent, but I scarcely doubt that the same deficiency would have been shown as evidently as the same excellence undoubtedly was: for his perception of the most infinitesimal touches in ancient painting was almost magical, and his passive fidelity in following them out was such as is not ordinarily found compatible with strong inventive genius. In my own opinion then, whether in his writing or in his art, the same powers are shown in connection with the same limitations. Had he been strongly endowed with originating power he would have been a great painter or a noted writer of fiction. As it was the character of his genius to be passive rather than creative, it has been his less conspicuous, but not less noble task, to be the faithful chronicler of the humble life, which he knew as none can who are not born in it, with an intelligence altogether above it, and to be the interpreter and the preserver of much of the greatest work of past ages.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.



RECOLLECTIONS OF HENRY MERRITT	PAGE I
--	-----------

DIRT AND PICTURES SEPARATED :

CHAPTER

I. <i>Obscured Pictures</i>	69
II. <i>Durability of Pictures in Oils</i>	75
III. <i>Antipathy to Picture Restorations</i>	80
IV. <i>Picture Cleaning</i>	89
V. <i>The Varnish Glaze Theory</i>	91
VI. <i>Standard Pictures</i>	98
VII. <i>Vandyke's Process of Working</i>	103
VIII. <i>Special Cases from Rembrandt</i>	108
IX. <i>An Ideal Process of Painting</i>	114
X. <i>Idiosyncrasies of Picture Proprietors</i>	118
XI. <i>Professional Advisers</i>	123
XII. <i>Picture Destroyers</i>	129
XIII. <i>The Restorer</i>	131
XIV. <i>Devotion of the Restorer</i>	134

	PAGE
SELECTIONS FROM OCCASIONAL WRITINGS :	
<i>Rembrandt</i>	141
<i>Paul Brill</i>	149
<i>Hans Holbein in England</i>	154
<i>Diétrich</i>	162
<i>Gerard Dow</i>	166
<i>The Pictures in the International Exhibition</i>	171
A STORY OF A FLOWER	267

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
SKETCH BY H. MERRITT	<i>To face page 45</i>
SKETCH BY „ „	46
‘ A VERY HOPEFUL LOOKING MORNING,’ BY H. MERRITT „	48
‘ YE BANKS AND BRAES ’	50
SKETCH	52
SKETCH	54
RECOLLECTION OF EARLY DAYS	56
LIGHT BEYOND	58
SKETCH	60
SKETCH	64
SKETCH	138

RECOLLECTIONS OF HENRY MERRITT

RECOLLECTIONS OF HENRY MERRITT.

THE march of the Prussians upon Paris, where I was then studying art and living with a sister at a boarding-school, drove me unwillingly to London, where the great good of my life awaited me.

My father, ready to gratify my wish to study art here as it could not be studied in Philadelphia, arranged that I should live with friends in London. A studio, however, could not be had under their roof, and chance led me to find one in the house where Henry Merritt lived. I soon heard that he was a restorer and a connoisseur, but with timidity natural in a woman living alone in a foreign country, I avoided every acquaintance which might seem to arise in an accidental manner. I shut myself into an ugly studio, with a window through which I could look neither on the earth nor into the sky, and produced ugly pictures with no truth in them.

A relative of mine, travelling in Austria, picked up some wonderful pictures—wonderful bargains, at all events—and sent them to me to be housed until he sailed for America. He desired, moreover, that they should be restored by the artist living so near me.

My landlord carried to Mr. Merritt my request that he would look at these pictures. The case when unpacked discovered two colossal canvases, representing

dogs and cats fighting in a well-filled larder ; two small, modest little pictures were by Paul Veronese, or so the dealer had sworn. Other works were equally desirable. Mr. Merritt found me surveying the lot with no great satisfaction.

He paused on the steps leading down into my studio, and suddenly I felt anxiety lest he should in any way associate my idea of fine art with the specimens before him. I said apologetically, 'I was not consulted in the purchase, but my friend wishes to ask you to restore them.' 'They are hardly in my line,' he answered ; 'but I will tell you of someone who can wash them and give them a slight varnish. Now will you come to see my pictures?' I followed him along the corridor as he led the way to his studio. But first we passed through a little study, where I exclaimed with delight at the fine collection of Eastern china and enamel, at the Italian mirrors, the inlaid chairs and cabinets of antique design. Leopard skins and musical instruments hung in the corners, and carved brackets with vases of graceful form carried the precious colours over every wall. In the corner by the one long window was Mr. Merritt's chair, whence he could enjoy the grouping of his picturesque collection, or might look out on to his balcony. Here he had arranged a miniature fish-pond, shaded by some pieces of cork bark and a gnarled branch, from which a spray of ivy drooped over the water ; a few gold crocus-cups unfolded in a shaded nook. It was never-ending amusement to him to feed the fish, and to rescue them from untimely death when they had jumped out of their shallow pond.

Looking into the room again, I saw that some

oranges, carelessly placed, brought a delightful contrast into a group of blue jars and plates. Mr. Merritt let me look at everything, and enjoyed my pleasure; but I laughed at the untidy fashion in which he kept his list of engagements, written in chalk on the wall opposite where he sat. There were indications of caricatures, too, sketched anywhere on the green and gold paper, and everywhere a most odd mixture of splendour and carelessness. For his pipe and tobacco a common flower-pot saucer sufficed. 'Vile habits,' he said, 'should only use vile things.' When I could steal a glance at his face it could not be forgotten. He was not like anyone else.

In the studio I found a treat of another sort. On every side were stacked pictures upon pictures, leaving scarcely access to the book-shelves, but space enough for easel and chair. Here I was allowed to see the choicest of those paintings which had come to him for repair. Now panels blistered by fire, but not beyond his skill to recover; now a canvas torn by the housemaid's broom; oftener pictures encrusted with old varnish and discoloured by time, or even modern paintings cracked in process of drying through use of unsuitable mediums.

'You must never tell what you see here,' he said. 'This is a hospital for pictures, and to have been in a hospital makes their soundness suspected. When I have exerted my greatest skill to save a precious work from destruction its owner will be careful to conceal that anything has been done. It is my greatest success when my toil is invisible. Whatever I write is anonymous also. Think of that, little girl, and be glad that you may devote

yourself to a beautiful art, and win fame and happiness in the pursuit.'

He made me look at a group of saints by Bellini ; then at a weird landscape by Carpaccio, where two ladies, walking in a dream-like garden, meet their own ghosts, bearing one a mirror, one a vase. An open grave separated the living and the spirits. Then he turned to a silvery group by Teniers, a party of gallants, dining before an inn, served in the open air by bustling hosts. A sketch from Tintoret's flashing brush, 'A Little Virgin,' thought to be by Raphael ; a portrait by Sir Joshua. When I had looked in amazement at all these treasures, looked long and silently into them, Mr. Merritt said :

'Now you have seen enough for one day, but you may learn a great deal here. I will show you whatever is good for you.'

After that I was often in this delightful studio ; and it was a curious proof of a sort of commanding gentleness in the man that while I never dared approach him without an invitation, I also never thought of leaving him until he sent me away. I always felt in his company like a child on good behaviour.

Being in great conceit of a picture by which I intended to win everlasting renown in the exhibition of the Royal Academy, when also it was quite too late to profit by any criticism, I begged my friend to give me his opinion of it.

I thought the Piper of Hamelin piping away the children, as Robert Browning has sung the story, would be a delightful subject ; but having got the piper, I found models so expensive and my purse so slender, that I decided to design a swarm of rats instead of a

bevy of children, hoping that the sale of my masterpiece would enable me to paint the companion picture afterwards.

Mr. Merritt did not look at it unkindly, 'but,' said he, 'it is as if you wanted advice about a book when it is printed and bound. Let me advise you next time when your picture is begun. In the first place, choose something of human interest, only a head or a portrait.'

From that time he assumed the direction of my studies. A portrait or two gave me the means to employ models constantly, and I set myself to study from them with all energy and happiness. Every impulse I had previously felt driving me to become an artist was now merged in the great wish to please my master. I had scruples about occupying his time, for he took extraordinary pains with me, and after resolving a hundred times to ask what fee he would accept for these lessons, and never daring to approach the subject, I became more courageous at a distance, and wrote a letter with all the delicacy I could command, enclosing a cheque to begin with. And when it was posted I fell to trembling. Within five minutes after the postman's knock, which shattered my nerves as a hundred cannon might have done, the cheque was returned to me with a polite note. My master did not come that day, nor the next, nor the next. I heard his step, his voice ; he seemed to go everywhere, to speak to everybody except me. All the following day I was making little efforts to knock at his door and beg his pardon. A dozen times I got to the end of the corridor, and ran back again, but at last, late in the afternoon, I actually stood before him.

He remained in his arm-chair enjoying the evening light ; he only held out his hand, and I stammered something quite incoherent.

‘Oh, I am not angry, little girl, I never thought of such a thing. But you see if I teach you I must have the right to do it my own way. I must come when I like and scold you as much as I choose, and be altogether my own master if I am to be yours.’ So it was : how he scolded me ; how ruthlessly he rubbed out again and again the work of days, bidding me do it better ; what pains he took to make me appreciate true points of excellence ! When my work was dry, and had lain by awhile, he would sketch upon it in crayon, designing backgrounds or trying various effects of *chiaro oscuro*. No one ever witnessed as I have done his fertility of invention, his refinement of colouring, his variety in touch. Often he would work thus for a couple of hours, transforming my tame study of a model into a vision. The picture would go through a succession of different effects, any one of which could have satisfied a less imaginative mind. He would then throw down the chalks or the brushes, as the case might be, just give me time to study it, and wash off all he had done, bidding me make another design according to similar laws.

In such lessons I used to stand behind him, breathless with excitement, never speaking a word, taking care to supply the pallet, and to remove all obstacles from his track, as he rapidly walked forwards and backwards or even up the stairs to have a better view of the effect.

The lesson over, I was often permitted to go with him to his window, to fill his pipe, and then sitting quietly in my own corner opposite him to wait for his words,

‘You *may* come,’ he would say; never ‘Will you come?’ I adore the recollection of these hours!

The rare charm of my teacher lay in his freedom from all affectation, his scorn of petty motives and selfishness, his conscious power and true dignity of soul. He must have been venerable in youth, and yet he kept his youth in middle age. Not seldom after my painting lesson I had a social lesson. Perhaps I had been thoughtless of my model and not observed her weariness. If I did not choose to eat or rest for hours, at least I might allow others to do so. Sometimes I gave offence to people around me in a manner which earned me the name of ‘proud Yankee.’ I did not take pains to be gentle and thoughtful for all. Perhaps I wasted time in going to parties, or appeared extravagant in my dress. My faults were never passed over, but kindly shown up to me in a manner to fill me with remorse. He would say: ‘There is no use in my teaching you a refined and noble art, if you cannot also learn to have a big soul; to be a great artist your whole character must be great.’

Sometimes while he was thus discoursing, one of the little children of the house would come unasked, and climbing into his lap fall asleep there. Another, if she felt wronged in the nursery, would come to him with an appeal for justice. This, of course, when their mother had left them to the servants’ care. Even the household cat, though he disliked cats, came complaining to him if her wants had been forgotten, and though very tired he descended into the kitchen to provide for her. His gentleness won all to love him.

I feel compelled to make some record of the coura-

geous, upright, generous life revealed to me more plainly than to any other, and to bear witness, at least, to the deep impression this noble character has made upon my own. This mind so liberally endowed with genius, and developed through unusual experiences, is suddenly lost in darkness. It is natural to cry out against the inevitable oblivion of time, natural to hoard a little longer some still warm embers of a fading fire.

How often I have listened to the anecdotes of his early days, told with such complete frankness that all he related seemed to have occurred under my own eyes, somehow to have been actually experienced by me.

Henry Merritt was born at Oxford, June 8, 1822. His parents' home was a cottage on ground now occupied by Keble College. There was a row of cottages, with a crescent-shaped garden at the back, and small gardens in front. The Merritts' had the largest garden, in which they cultivated strawberries to sell, and vegetables and flowers for their own use. The four-roomed cottage looked over wide open fields, and not far down the road had a glimpse of an inn with a gorgeous new sign. Merritt always declared that he remembered this picture, and that, not having yet learned to walk, he crawled across the muddy road to inspect it more closely. So evident was it that the picture had allured him, and so much mud did he gather on the way, that his father made a long poem on the occasion. Joseph Merritt, the father, was a tailor by trade, and eked out his earnings as prompter in the theatre. He had a good memory, and was fond of quoting noted passages of plays. The boy's mother seems early to have discovered that Henry was more

intelligent than her other children, and set her heart upon getting him educated.

Henry was the fifth child, and followed by four others. Ten shillings a week had often to support the whole family. In a good season, when term in the University brought life and business, or when the earliest strawberries could be sold for twopence each, the children had almost food enough. But the long vacation, and generally the increased difficulties of the winter season, necessitated prolonged skimping in a home where there was never a chance to save. The most vivid recollection of early youth was a continual never-satisfied hunger. In the fields, or by the roadside, the boy's eyes were always scanning the herbs for anything that could be eaten. The roots of flags were bitter, but they helped to fill. In those days poor people were allowed to glean the potato patches, or even to break off the early shoots of turnips. Once, in making a short cut home, the child found a thicket of burrs so tall that he could not break through them, but crawled underneath, where the stems allowed a passage. Inside he discovered an open space, over which the burrs, closely tangled, wove an impenetrable roof. Here a number of dabchicks had built their nests, and in each were found a few eggs. It was a delightful feast, never to be forgotten. The boy consoled his kind heart by replacing the stolen eggs with pebbles of about the same size. Sometimes he aspired to higher game : a rook's nest, for instance, was a rare prize, watched with greatest longing, seldom indeed obtained.

On a winter morning, when the squealing of pigs was heard in a neighbouring pork butchery, the boys would

spring from bed and hurry to the yard. The pigs were singed, and the ears and tails lopped off. These precious morsels burnt crisp would be devoured with relish.

A still more extraordinary method of obtaining food was to set the dog after a flock of ducks as they went waddling homewards from the river side, when the sly dog nipped at one and another, hurrying and frightening them, an egg was often dropped in the road.

Notwithstanding this extreme poverty Henry Merritt was sent to school when about five years old. In the first instance he was the only scholar of a pair of young girls, daughters of an upholsterer. Instead of teaching him letters, they surreptitiously taught him to pick over old horse-hair, and amused themselves by dressing him in their father's trousers and coat. His mother, always watchful, happened one day to look into the window of the so-called schoolroom, and discovered her boy, her chief pride, thus ridiculously attired, and forthwith carried him home. He next was sent to the primitive infant-school so well described in 'Robert Dalby.'

Henry was always of delicate health, his sensitive, excitable organisation almost succumbed to nervous fever before his tenth year. On this occasion, determined to save her boy, the good mother sought the most eminent physician in Oxford. She waited outside his door until the great man returned in his carriage from a round of visits to important patients. When the poor woman begged him to come at once to her humble cottage, fatigued as he was, he bluntly refused. She dragged herself home hopeless. Whether the physician was struck by her desponding gesture, or whether a moment's reflection banished fatigue from his charitable

heart, he sprang into his carriage again, and reached the cottage before her.

As a prelude to this nervous fever, the child had taken a cold, which made a lasting impression on his constitution. Insufficient food, scant clothing, and labour from childhood, gave the body a poor chance. When only five years old, Henry was out in the meadows one autumn in company with boys whom his mother disliked. On a sudden they were surrounded by the floods. The bigger boys were quick in escaping, and left the child on a little knoll, while the flood rose rapidly far around. A long way off he could see a troop of boys bathing and swimming, and to them he shouted with all his might. Finally, to his joy, a big, good-natured fellow swam toward him. 'Now, Harry, take off your togs, roll 'em up in your breeches, and tie 'em round your head.' This correctly accomplished, he took the child on his back, and carried him almost to land, the clothes still quite dry. But once more in hail of his companions, the deliverer became ashamed of so much philanthropy, and to save his reputation dived under until the little bundle was saturated. Glad enough to be landed, but in a second dilemma, the child endeavoured to dry his clothes, in vain, for dews were falling and the sun low. At last, compelled to draw on those cold clinging garments, he ran home; did not venture to show himself at supper, but got into bed dressed as he was, thinking only of avoiding punishment by this capital method of drying. He told me this story when his cough became worse one November, saying that was how it began.

During the slow convalescence from nervous fever,

Henry could lie on a bank in the meadow, or in a corner of the garden wall, too weak to move, but through illness and suffering more keenly sensitive to the beautiful life of trees and flowers. For the first time he attempted to draw what he loved.

Through a crevice of the garden wall he could look into a ropewalk, which became to him so familiar that he could describe it in 'Robert Dalby' as though he had lived there. The gloomy pile of the old gaol flung its shadows across the stream where he oftenest went fishing. The prison and the ropewalk, which furnished the implement of too frequent executions, became the central figures in his long, imaginative meditations.

The description of an aged great-uncle must belong to this period. A grand old fellow, far above common stature, with lofty furrowed brow and sightless eyes. His youth had been passed as servant on a nobleman's estate ; but the estate coming to the hands of a new family, the old servant was turned off forgotten. He had his own cottage and piece of ground until great age and blindness overcame him. Henry remembers him standing in the sun leaning on a huge staff. The old man would welcome his visitor, and, going through the potato-patch, hold a good sack, bidding him fill it and carry it home : a precious gift, though the little nephew, quite unable to lift the weight, had to drag it a great distance.

The lonely old man at last preferred to all lodging a sort of lair which he made for himself by an opening in a pile of wood. Into this he would creep, liking the odour of fresh pine logs, and finding a warm, dry bed sheltered from every draught. Friends would provide him with food, and he lived with a sort of happiness and

enjoyment of independence. The officers of the parish thought it their duty to interfere. They coaxed and persuaded, and, under a false pretence, finally lodged the old man in the workhouse, taking particular pains for his comfort. When the blind giant discovered where he was, with a mighty effort he broke away the iron foot-rails of his bed, doubled and twisted them in his hands like wire ; his feeble life blazed out in rage and mortification, and expired.

Henry was never so intimately connected with the poacher Ben as described in 'Robert Dalby,' for until he left Oxford he always lived under his father's roof ; but there is no doubt that he learned to feed puppies, to assist in a kennel, and to provide rats for the amusement of undergraduates. Once he had an opportunity to see the ward of a hospital ; for in a fight he had injured the inside of his lip so as to require a surgical operation, of which he always bore the scar. The wound was dressed, and the patient was expected to remain some days in bed ; but he found an early opportunity of escaping from the window into the friendly arms of a great tree, and thence home.

When eleven years old, Henry Merritt was entered at the Blue Coat School, of which he has left so vivid a picture. In a year he became the second teacher of the first class. On Sundays he sang the alto and solo parts in the choir of Carfax Church. The recompense was not great, being half-a-crown at Christmas and a penny bun four times a year ; but the master of the choir distinguished young Merritt by taking him to the picture galleries of the Bodleian Library.

In the intervals of school hours, Henry ran errands

for Mrs. Wiggins, a small stationer, who, like other Oxford tradespeople then and now, found great difficulty in collecting debts. The boy of eleven became extremely useful as a dun. In his extraordinary simplicity he little dreamed that there was any impropriety in asking for money due, and he managed to gain admission and obtain payment with a seeming effrontery that gave him many a laugh in later years. One bill of five pounds ten shillings had been a long time owing, and he was instructed to call for it at a certain hour on a learned professor. Observing undergraduates use the knocker on the professor's door, he also knocked with the same confidence, obtained admission, and found the professor engaged with his class, but delivered his message undismayed : ' Please, sir, Mrs. Wiggins sends this little account, and would be glad to have her money, which has been owing three years.' ' How much is it, boy?' ' Five pounds ten shillings.' ' Here are five pounds; I have no change.' ' If you will give me a pound, sir, I will fetch change in a moment,' and he did. ' Now, boy, sign the receipt'; and Henry Merritt signed himself ' Mrs. Wiggins.' ' Are you Mrs. Wiggins, boy?' The professor was glad to raise a laugh on his side; and then instructed his little dun in the proper form of signing receipts.

From so great an income as eighteenpence a week earned in this manner, Merritt saved one penny for a picture magazine, which gave him not only woodcuts from great pictures but a variety of useful information. Whenever he could find a quiet hour he learned to copy the engravings. By some wonderful luck he once hoarded enough money to buy a small box of water-

colours, which he ordered from London. He awaited the arrival of his treasure with the greatest anxiety. At last the carrier appeared inquiring in the lane of humble cottages whether anyone knew of Henry Merritt, Esq. The small Blue-coat boy, to the dismay of everyone, claimed the precious package, and got a scolding from the carrier, who had been seeking the 'Esquire' in more fashionable neighbourhoods. In the crowded cottage there was little opportunity for quiet or meditation, and Merritt, in the intervals of the Sunday services—his only leisure—actually sought for rest and quiet in the pigstye. He made a place for himself in a corner, and there, at least, no noisy children pursued him. The old pig had a share of his attention, for he curried her, and kept her pen comfortable, and the haven of peace he found was long a secret. Once he was inspired by a lucky thought to decorate the wash-house, so as to induce the family to prefer it to the sitting-room, which he might thus obtain for himself. Over the whitewashed walls he painted, in transparent oil colour, garlands of blooming creepers, and masses of foliage. Now, he said to his brothers and sisters, there is something for you to admire, stay there and leave me the sitting-room. The brilliancy of transparent colour obtained in this accidental way, and the permanence of it, he endeavoured later to adapt in a new method of colouring.

As he approached fifteen the time came when the trustees of the Blue Coat School would apprentice their pupils. Merritt entreated to be made an artist, 'Make pictures?' said his father, 'better learn first to make the frames,' and so he was bound for the term of seven years to carvers and gilders doing a first-class business.

Ten pounds were paid to them by the trustees of the school, and during the last two years only he was to receive wages—namely, four shillings a week. His father promised in the indenture to supply necessary food and clothing. These masters were very unlike the old carver to whom Robert Dalby so gladly bound himself, and the apprenticeship was a period of sore vexation: seven years' penal servitude, as he often called it. Many opportunities occurred, however, to see and study pictures, as his masters were in a large way of business, and often employed in the galleries of the University; also in those days he was often sent to the studio of William Boxall, already a young artist of marked ability, to take him colours or canvas. On these occasions Merritt observed with eager appreciation the method of the artist. Once a portrait of Boxall by himself was sent to the gilders for a frame or to be lined, when the young apprentice contrived to copy it.

To the last day of his life, Merritt looked fondly at an engraving from a picture by Turner, a view of 'New College Street.' He could see in it the spires of two churches where, in the days of his apprenticeship, he had climbed to fasten the gilt weather-vanes.

He seemed to have had greater aptitude for carving than for gilding, and his skill in drawing was often of use. So soon as he understood anything of his trade, he was glad to work early and late at extra hours, whenever an opportunity offered of so earning a few pence, for the seven years were full of privations. The meat and clothing which his father had pledged to provide were of the scantiest. So poor was the family that when an epidemic of small-pox brought down several in the

Merritts' cottage, and two children died, their little coffins had to lie in the same room where other children lay ill. Henry escaped the disease, though he nursed the patients.

The period of apprenticeship was not without some joyful recollections, the chief and never forgotten being the instruction in drawing given gratuitously by William Alfred Delamotte. In the story of Robert Dalby, this incident is told with fidelity and gratitude. The description of the French artist and his goodness there given would be injured by any word I might attempt to add. Fifteen years after these lessons, when Merritt published his *Essays on the restoration of pictures*, they were pre-faced with the following dedication :

'To William Alfred Delamotte, Esq., who, when I was a boy, a stranger, unknown to him even by name, carefully and gratuitously instructed me in the rudiments of art, I inscribe this little volume, with long cherished feelings of respect.'

I have several little pictures in oil colour, indicative of true genius, painted by Merritt at this time. A country lane and a hill side with groves of trees, touched in a strong broad manner and clear low tones, more like the sketch of a master than the first effort of a boy. He must also have had ability in taking likenesses, for he persuaded his fellow-apprentices, who were well fed in the master's house, to sit for their portraits, and pay for it by bringing him their share of the pudding.

In 1844, having worked about one year as journeyman gilder to his former masters, Merritt was thrown out of employment in the long vacation.

This did not cause him great regret or great anxiety.

He found ample opportunity of studying pictures. In the Bodleian Library he copied two pictures. He got access to books, and read and studied constantly. Meanwhile he had received, on an affidavit as to his apprenticeship, the Freedom of the City of Oxford, which granted certain privileges of fishing, pasturing, &c. The former was of real use to him in supplying frequent food at this season. He also found portraits to paint at the modest price of ten shillings, and in one way or another just managed to exist, while every effort was bent upon the acquirement of knowledge, and especially art-knowledge.

Thus employed, he remained in Oxford until early in 1846, until a well-to-do brother, a scout in one of the Colleges, with a comfortable income, told him to get out of the city, as his appearance was a disgrace. Henry Merritt waited no further advice; carrying on his shoulder a box about twelve inches square, which he always retained in his possession, and which contained easily all his worldly goods—carving tools, pencils, and a change of linen—he went out from Oxford, and walked the entire journey to London. His heart always lingered fondly among the memories of his native place. Its silvery streams, its meadows starred with flowers, its avenues of majestic elms, its Gothic arches and moss-grown walls, were henceforth to him the fabric of a vision.

The next few years were indeed dark and lonely. In the narrow streets between the Strand and Holborn he found one or another dismal lodging, sometimes in a loft above a stable, accessible only by a ladder, to be pulled in after him: at one time a night lodging only, with no

rest or shelter by day ; once he rented half the narrow bed of a poor tailor. He had an anecdote of a lodging where the four corners of the room and the middle belonged each to a separate family. They lived in peace and concord, until the family in the middle took a boarder ! It was, however, for a single night only that he saw the interior of a public lodging-house, to which he was driven because distress had been put upon his landlady's house, and her tenants' poor furniture seized for rent. Oddly enough, in the rough penny-a-night lodging, he met face to face an old Oxford friend, who has also since won a fair place in the world. The first thought of each was to exact a promise of secrecy. Merritt's dear mother in Oxford was never to know of his struggles and privations. Among the many landladies met with in these wanderings was one whose good nature permitted her to lend small sums to her poor lodgers, of which loans, when not repaid, she had a delicate way of reminding them. She would borrow a penny or a halfpenny of the debtor, and the following day, with a slight emphasis in her manner, 'Here, my gentleman, is the penny I borrowed yesterday.' 'Here is your halfpenny, sir. I am very particular to pay my debts.'

In these days the best diet that could be afforded was often but a loaf of hot bread, into which a penny-worth of dripping inserted dissolved through the whole mass. This eaten hot was a very filling meal, and its digestion took a very long time, so that hardly more food was needed for a day. A more luxurious dinner was to be had in a soup-kitchen, where a long narrow deal table, with bowls scooped out of its surface, and spoons chained at

each place, was thus always set for guests. Woe to the man, however, who thought of dining upon credit ! The great pot of soup was always on the fire, and was served out by means of a squirt. If the pennies were not put down immediately the soup was served, the useful squirt could also suck it up again, every drop of it, from the very plate of the hungry but too daring man.

In a life so coarse and poor, living, indeed, only from day to day, Merritt still contrived to acquire knowledge both of art and of literature. He found casual employment as a gilder, just enough to keep him in such poor food and lodging, and was permitted by a dealer in old pictures and curiosities to set up an easel in a corner of a lumber room, where occasionally he was of use in regilding a frame, or in concealing the decay of an old canvas. Here he painted little fancies of his own, without the aid of models or of elaborate materials, but always refined in colour and composition. He was able to sell them for about five shillings. A print seller would also give five shillings for a copy in colour of a print after Gainsborough or Landseer. In these he succeeded so well, that, thirty years later, one of his own pictures was brought to him for his opinion. 'Is it by Gainsborough ?' 'No, I painted it myself from a print after Gainsborough.' Sometimes there was no place to work, no place even to rest in by day, and he was compelled to linger under draughty archways to escape the rain, or found enjoyment in reading at the second-hand bookstalls ; once, in great want of a shilling, he begged the bric-a-brac dealer to let him earn a trifle in carrying various objects to another shop, for a moving was in hand. The request was granted, and after one or two journeys, a

bronze Atlas bearing the globe was put upon his shoulder. This incident, and the unfortunate fall of the Atlas, are described in 'Robert Dalby' with literal truthfulness.

The picture dealer soon found that the youth, aspiring through such trials to become an artist, had a skilful touch, and could be trusted to repair old and worn canvases, of which he had enough to supply constant work at the very lowest wages. Thus poverty and accident conquered the genius that could draw no livelihood from their barren soil. Merritt, after all his struggles, had to abandon the hope of expressing his own heart in glowing lines and colours, and thenceforth, with rare sympathy, devoted his genius to rescuing from destruction the works of others. The generous sympathy, the earnest tender comprehension found in him by all who knew him, corresponded to his appreciation of the many forms of expression in art.

He soon became familiar with the touch of many artists, as we might with the handwriting of friends, and his judgment on the authenticity of pictures was early recognised by the dealer, who took him to a great sale in Holland for the sake of his advice. Merritt worked for more than one small dealer, and was not always paid in money. On one occasion a case of sago was forced upon him, which his employer had been obliged to receive for a bad debt. It was a useless thing to Merritt, but he bethought himself of the dear mother in Oxford, for whom it was suitable food, and sent it to her; convincing her, by the wholesale character of the gift, that he had made his fortune. His trials in these days were carefully concealed from his family.

Thus four years wore on, and prospects mended so far that the young restorer ventured to take a better lodging, where he might be able to receive a patron. In Red Lion Square he found a large, desolate house with grand staircases, lofty ceilings, and every melancholy sign of decayed grandeur. Here he rented a room that by day served as a studio and by night was transformed into a bedroom ; for he only unrolled from a cupboard a straw mattress and a pillow, and again early in the morning, before the richer tenants were stirring, stole downstairs for a jug of water, and rearranged and cleaned his studio.

Here many nights he sat in darkness unable to afford a candle, sifting the ashes on his hearth through his fingers that no atom might be wasted ; the greatest luxury he could afford—a pipe filled with coffee-grounds ! No, not the greatest ! His heart yearned for affection, and into the lonely room crept a little mouse. He contrived to spare a crumb for the little creature, and allowed her to make a nest and raise a brood in a corner of his mattress. Once he was compelled to regret his bounty to the mice, and took back a crust he had given them to satisfy his own hunger. His difficulties were always studiously concealed from his kin in Oxford. Harry in London must be doing well, they thought, so an elder brother wrote to borrow a sovereign. Feeling that some great emergency must have prompted a request so extravagant, Henry contrived to raise the sum among his friends. The poor will always endeavour to aid one another. He borrowed a few shillings here and a few there, and in great haste despatched the pound to Oxford. The recipient presented himself in a day or

two at Red Lion Square in the best spirits, having wanted the money solely for a visit to London.

Another brother, ten years Henry's senior, for some time past established as a grocer in a London suburb, hearing of the studio in Red Lion Square, thought it might be safe to call upon the rising artist. Henry at the moment had but ninepence in the world, and six of them went for ale and cheese to regale his well-to-do relative. The brother was busy in noticing appearances. 'Why, Harry, you must need a string every time you dress, and a knife to undress!' He refused to believe the story of the pet mice, for no mouse, he declared, could pick up a living there, with which consolation he departed. Henry returned the visit, but was not so warmly received by his brother's wife as to induce him to repeat it.

Still, on the whole, Merritt gradually mastered his world of troubles, for he neglected no opportunity of increasing his store of learning. Even by the sacrifice of food he did not hesitate to procure a book or a print which could improve his knowledge of the history or materials of painting or of the best literature. No opportunity was neglected of studying pictures. In the course of six years, from the time he left Oxford, his progress was immense, and a decent subsistence seemed to be assured to him.

About the year 1851 a suit was decided which caused a collection of old paintings to fall, in lieu of a debt, to Mr. Joseph Parrinton. Dirt, discoloured varnish, and gaping cracks rendered the pictures scarcely visible, and Mr. Parrinton contemplated them with much dissatisfaction, when a tradesman said that he knew a

young fellow who could make those old pictures like new. Mr. Parrinton accepted this chance introduction, and brought a picture to be experimented upon. Then for the first time Merritt had the pleasure of working for a gentleman, and fortunately it was for one appreciative, thoughtful, sympathetic, capable of discerning genius and courage in the lonely careworn artist. Mr. Parrinton recognised at once his skill, and gave him constant employment, cheering him with intelligent society and companionship. On the plea of consulting him about the purchase of pictures, he enticed him many a day to stroll about the city, in and out of picture galleries and sale-rooms, not forgetting to make him share a substantial meal. He even invited the poor artist to the country, welcomed him to a refined home and the society of his family. On the first occasion, and not the first only, Merritt, not possessed of a valise, and unable to afford one, carried his wardrobe in a paper parcel. Met at the station by carriage and footman, who inquired for his luggage, he quietly handed over the valuable package. Probably no man ever lived so incapable of any pretence. What he appeared he was. In later years, often the chosen friend of men in high position and of the greatest culture, he never concealed or forgot the poor from whom he came. His stories of early hardships, fascinatingly told with flashes of delicate wit, the cruelty of them softened by the ease and comfort gathered around him, were of a sort seldom heard *viva voce*. One sketch of this period which he delighted to relate was 'The Girl of Camberwell Green.' When he had called up my tears by stories of want and hunger and loneliness, then, with a twinkle in his eye, he would

say—‘ Did I ever tell you about the Girl of Camberwell Green ?.’ Leaning back in his arm-chair, with an extra puff or two at his pipe, which needed lighting every five minutes, turning his face towards me and smiling through half-closed eyes, he would begin :

‘ Once on a spring evening I was standing under a gas-light opposite a theatre in the Strand ; I had a little to spare in my pocket, but tried to resist the extravagance of seeing the play. At any rate it amused me to watch the crowd enter, and perhaps after a while I should hear some music outside. Presently I noticed a young girl scanning the people with some anxiety, she looked at everyone who approached the theatre until only a few straggling groups lingered at the door. Apparently she resolved to go away, then repented of her resolve and returned to wait again. For my part I could only watch her artless, childlike face under its cloud of disappointment. How her lip pouted and her eyes gleamed ! She wore a fresh print dress and a straw bonnet. When we heard the signals that the play had begun she finally made a decisive movement of departure. I couldn’t bear to lose the pretty, fresh little creature. I hurried after her, and said, “ Miss, you expected, no doubt, a friend to take you to the theatre, and are disappointed. Will you hear the play with me ? ” She gave me a full look out of her clear blue eyes and assented with joy. I paid for two places in the pit, and found seats. All the evening she sat there enchanted, and while she was absorbed in the play I could only look at her face. Smiles passed over her rosy lips, tears stood in her great clear eyes ; once in excitement she clung to my arm. At last, the play over, I accom-

panied the girl to her home. It was a long way, three miles at least to Camberwell Green, but we never thought of the extravagance of riding, and her light step never flagged. She insisted upon introducing me to her father and brothers, who seemed just returned from some professional engagement. They were hanging up violins and bows, and placing music books on a high shelf. The artless little beauty gave a full account of our acquaintance, and her enjoyment of the play, and I was made welcome to ale and cheese. We did not part until an evening had been fixed for another visit to the theatre.

‘When I presented myself again at her door I had taken some pains to look well, to brush my hair until it shone, and arrange my dress. When I rang, down came the little beauty, with her sleeves rolled up above her dimpled elbows, and traces of soap-suds on her plump arms.

“La ! Mr. Merritt, I knew you would come, but mother wouldn’t believe it, so to please her I was finishing the washing. If you would be so good just to sit down a minute, I will be ready in no time.” She tripped away, and very soon reappeared in her simple finery, fresh as a rose. We enjoyed the long walk together in one of the brightest of spring evenings, the theatre, the walk home again. Anything more fresh and natural than my companion I had never seen. I was thinking of this in silence—I may have seemed to her absent-minded—and trying to linger on the few last steps I began to say something. She interrupted me promptly: “I know what you are going to say, Mr. Merritt, you are going to propose—but you must not do it. I am not at all the right one for you. I should

make you very unhappy, and so would you me. You are serious, you like to be quiet and to study, and I couldn't bear that at all. My father plays the fiddle every night at Camberwell Music Hall, *and I always lead off the dance*, and I like that best of everything in the world. I should be dreadfully put out if I couldn't dance every night. Now, you see, we could never do together."

This was not the only escape from early matrimony. Once Merritt had painted the portrait of an innkeeper, and in the important commission succeeded to the satisfaction of all concerned. The innkeeper, serene in the enjoyment of his vanity, invited the artist and some friends to partake of a flowing bowl. One after another in *crescendo* expressed admiration of the portrait, until finally the idea got introduced that some extra reward should be heaped upon the artist. At that moment the innkeeper's daughter 'Sal,' a long lank person of uncertain age, entered to wait on table, and her father concluded a burst of rhetoric and gratitude with : 'He shall have our Sal!'

Sal showed such signs of agreeing to her father's generous offer, that Merritt snatched his hat and ran.

A new era in his life began in 1852, when he became a lodger of a friend, living near the Euston Road. Here he found intellectual companionship and a share in domestic life. His friend was connected with journalism, and introduced him to the 'Leader.'

In 1853 Merritt published in the 'Leader' ten chapters on the 'Works of the Old Masters, their Ruin and Renovation,' and from this time became a constant contributor to various journals, taking no little pains with

his style. The question of the restoration of the pictures belonging to the nation came under the discussion of Parliament, and was echoed in many journals. The 'Athenæum' published, not without decided influence, various papers on this subject contributed by Henry Merritt. He also wrote chiefly on art for the 'Empire' newspaper. Early in the following year he collected these articles from the 'Leader' and from the 'Athenæum,' and from this basis formed the little volume entitled 'Pictures and Dirt Separated.'

In the publication of these essays he had the sympathy and encouragement of his friend Mr. Parrinton.

To Sir William Boxall (then Mr. Boxall, A.R.A.) remembered since Oxford days, Merritt ventured to introduce himself by presenting a copy of his work, and at once found an appreciative welcome. Mr. Boxall was in a position to give the poor restorer valuable introductions, and he did not hesitate to do so, as the evident merit of the little book and the recognition by leading reviews of its talent, sound principles, and elegant style, authorised. Introduced by Mr. Boxall to Sir Charles Eastlake, then Director of the National Gallery, Merritt was immediately employed by him on works requiring the highest skill.

Here, under the direction of the greatest connoisseur of the day, of all English artists the one most learned in the history of art and in the chemistry of its materials, the restorer may be said to have attained all that was needful for the mastery of his art. At this time, also, Merritt became acquainted with Mr. George Richmond (then A.R.A. and Fine Art Commissioner), and found in him a true friend to the end of life. There was now no

difficulty in obtaining employment: not only various public institutions, but many people who had collections to care for began to look for the restorer who had so eloquently expressed the aim and limits of his art. Not only was he occupied in his studio during all hours when it was possible to see, but late into the night he studied and wrote. He now had a regular engagement to write art notices for the 'Morning Star,' at a salary of 25*l.* per annum.

It is not surprising among letters recording this first success following upon years of privation, to find a copy of one from Merritt to a water-cure physician: a sort of testimonial as to the cure of a long-standing indigestion.

The friends with whom he lived were as poor as himself, and now shared the benefits of his increased earnings. Now, too, he had the happiness of supplying his dear mother with the necessities of her declining years. The good mother's letters are tenderly preserved, and lying next to a package from Professor Ruskin. What a contrast!

Her letters, written with difficulty and spelled according to the inspiration of the moment, are full of tenderness. She always chides her son for unnecessary generosity towards her. 'You need not have sent the money so soon'; or, 'The canister was not empty yet'; or, 'I fear you have sent me what you need for yourself.' Were it possible to detail Merritt's countless acts of generosity—perpetual, unlimited, depending not on his love or liking for people, but on their wants—the prosperous years of his life would have an interest fully as great as those of his trials and poverty.

In 1856 Merritt made a visit of only a few days to Paris, and saw the galleries of the Louvre. During the following year he published various articles in the 'Art Treasures Examiner' of Manchester, and also visited Manchester during the Great Art Exhibition there, in order to write notices of it for 'The Star.' Separate essays on different Old Masters were composed. In this year also he began and finished the story of 'Robert Dalby,' which he kept nine years before offering to a publisher. He indulged in this literary labour as a sort of relaxation from the work of the studio. Recommended by Sir Charles Eastlake, William Boxall, R.A., and George Richmond, R.A., he was now consulted by many distinguished persons, and by most of the public institutions of England. He worked for the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge, the Archæological Institute of Great Britain, the National Portrait Gallery, the Society of Antiquaries, the Corporation of Trinity House, the Garrick Club, the Bishop of Oxford, and many others. By Mr. Gladstone he was treated with cordiality and friendliness. Merritt was commanded to restore many of the paintings at Hampton Court, and the large battle scenes discovered under coats of house-paint on the staircases of Marlborough House.

It is not surprising that with this incessant labour are found accounts of constant, ever-increasing ill-health. The malady of the lungs, which ultimately caused his death, was already established. In vain was he ordered to have change of air or a little rest. It is touching to see how often he supplied his friends, one family especially, who depended upon him for every comfort, with the

means of that enjoyment in the country or by the seashore, while he remained at home literally to work for them.

About this time the friends with whom he lived purchased of a building society a detached house on the Oval Road, near the north-east corner of Regent's Park. The house was called Dymoke Lodge, and was separated by a long strip of garden from the deep cutting of the railroad. Here Merritt gratified his love of plants and animals, filling the garden with fruit-trees, vegetables, and flowers, raising rabbits and poultry. Then it became a difficult matter to protect the flower-beds from the rabbits, but this was accomplished by laying down drain-pipes for the marauders to burrow in. A small fish-pond was stocked with tiny fish; even a goat was domesticated. A poor cat, whose tail had been mercilessly cut off, sought shelter under the garden wall, and her wounds were dressed by a tender hand. It is questionable whether Merritt had more enjoyment in his garden and live stock, or in the healthy amusement they afforded to the children of his friends. Besides a studio in 'The Lodge,' he now rented a studio in Langham Street. It is a curious fact that, until 1865, Merritt never put any money into a bank, and yet for ten years he had constantly earned large sums. His excuse was that some emergency might compel him to reduce the bank account to the last shilling—whereas, being his own banker, that could be done without mortification. His method of banking was very simple, for the notes he received were merely placed between the leaves of books, and returned to his book-shelves. It was evident to all who knew him that his unlimited generosity alone prevented him from saving a comfortable fortune.

About 1859, a long and wearing affliction of a friend caused Merritt great anxiety and even bodily fatigue. His own health failed ; for several years he was so ill and weak that he could undertake no work away from his house. He was liable to long spells of unconsciousness, owing to an affliction of the heart of a most serious nature, but he bore all his ills manfully, and continued his work, both of the pencil and of the pen.

In 1865 he first offered his story called 'Robert Dalby, and his World of Troubles,' to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, by whom it was published. This story embodied, if not in all respects the literal facts, at any rate the very pith and marrow of his early experiences. It was published anonymously, more from a certain diffidence and modesty in the author, than from any wish to conceal the trials he had endured. The authorship was no secret from his acquaintances.

During the same summer Merritt wrote the story of 'The Oxford Professor,' which, however, remained incomplete. He intended to re-write and alter parts, and even thought of incorporating the best scenes only in a new work. Carlotta, the heroine of this story, was a recollection of the famous harpist Maria Moesner, with whom, some years before, he had a short acquaintance, and whose power of musical expression had deeply impressed him. Professor Campo is certainly drawn from himself, perhaps unconsciously.

In the same year the portrait of 'Richard II.' was restored. This monumental portrait, the earliest extant of an English monarch, preserved in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster, was lent by the Dean and Chapter to the Great Exhibition of Manchester in 1857, and

afterwards to the South Kensington Portrait Exhibition in April 1866. On these occasions, from the interest of the subject, the portrait attracted great attention, and its condition was closely inspected. It became the general opinion of critics that the original work lay buried under thick repaintings at least a century old, and Mr. Richmond, R.A. urged that the picture should be cleaned before being returned to Westminster, and offered to superintend the operation and to work upon important parts himself. He argued so well that the picture was confided to him by the Dean and Chapter, and was accordingly removed to Merritt's studio at the Lodge, where the process of cleaning occupied several summer months. Mr. Richmond gave day after day to superintend and assist in the process, supplying the caution (as he has himself expressed it) to Merritt's courage. They were rewarded by discovering a portrait delicately painted in tempera, quite uninjured by the superimposed oil-paintings, and greatly superior to them in artistic qualities. It was, in fact, a triumph of restoration.

About this time Merritt formed an engagement to write art notices for the 'Standard,' and continued to do so for the rest of his life.

In 1866 it became necessary to break up the home at the Lodge ; and Merritt removed to Devonshire Street, where he obtained a good suite of rooms on one floor, and, if again lonely, at any rate found quiet and peace.

With all the expenses he had undertaken for others, it is not surprising that on removing to Devonshire Street, having paid his quarter's rent in advance, he had not five pounds left in the world. He had, however, a

store of engravings, casts, valuable books, and comfortable furniture, work waiting for his hand more than could be completed in a couple of years, and a good income from his position on the press.

At this time a brother of Merritt's, with wife and eight children, called upon him for support. I need not detail the circumstances under which this brother, who had long earned a good income, became utterly destitute and helpless. It ended by Merritt's renting a cottage, and supplying the family with all the necessities of life during eight years, when a legacy from a relative of the wife made it for a time unneedful.

This brings Merritt's history to the period when first I knew him. Can I better sketch his remaining years than by describing his goodness to me? He lived in the utmost simplicity, but surrounded by the choicest works of art. Among hundreds of ordinary pictures his studio always contained a few of the world's master-pieces. He delighted in them, but they were his tyrants. He feared to leave the house; though change and rest were constantly urged upon him, and many friends invited him to country homes, he never dared to leave London. When one of these precious pictures was safely returned, another was sure to fill its place. He counted them when he went out, when he came in, and in the wakeful hours of night. He seldom dared to have a fire in the studio, and watched every fire in the house. While he worked it was with energy, almost with fury. Every thought was occupied, or rather his mind admitted but one thought. After an hour's such effort he left the studio, and threw himself wearily into the old arm-chair, enjoying long, silent meditations, and a pipe. Sometimes

his eyes rested on a window-flower, or on the dull, ugly street ; and if I were in my corner opposite he would signify that I must be quiet. After long silence, he would then talk of Oxford as though he had lately walked under her stately elms ; across the meadows, where narcissus bloomed in spring ; or under her arches and old crumbling walls, where dainty flowers found a footing in every crevice of masonry. No beauty of his native place was ever forgotten.

After the long illness, from which he gradually recovered after removing to Devonshire Street, and another dangerous illness in the autumn of 1870, his health was doubly delicate. His breathing was always obstructed, his heart often faint. But he refused to regard these ailments, and the cheerfulness of his conversation almost concealed them from his friends. He used to be almost always tired, and then, at the end of a busy day, would wander out in the winter fogs to dine at a restaurant or visit his few intimates. On the gloomiest and darkest of November nights he liked to revisit the neighbourhoods familiar in his days of poverty ; perhaps to enter a cheap eating-house where he might find people of the class among whom he had lived, and who always retained his sympathy. After facing the past in these dismal scenes he was not sorry to find me at home, and to pour out to me the history of those days.

He had little rest on Sundays. Then it was the art notice had to be prepared, and it was seldom finished before night. Most often he found time to give me a lesson on Sunday morning. A number of my pictures were kept as studies, never to be sold or exhibited, so

that he felt free to paint upon them as was necessary for my instruction.

Probably no master ever had a finer instinct for composition, for colour, for all the charms of *chiaro oscuro*, or those peculiar bold touches which disguise and complete the labour of days.

In these lessons he enjoyed the freedom of invention which his own branch of art forbade. It was impossible to witness the display of his imagination and knowledge without realising in bitter sorrow that the real power and aim of his life had been for ever thwarted.

As I acquired the mastery of materials, and began to attempt ambitious designs, my master left me to my own resources, interfering only when I fell into manifest error.

One day in my absence he came into my studio, and by way of pointing out an error in my picture left the following sentences on my writing-table :—

‘Leonardo loved Jessamine, which he used sparingly as coronals, and the Narcissus.

‘Titian once in a way employed a few wild flowers, which he set like gems.

‘Vandyke a rose, now and then a wreath.

‘Velasquez seldom asked the aid of Flora.

‘Reynolds generalised flowers in his sylvan scenes unrecognisable in the mass, and now and then of blossoms a couple or so near at hand.

‘Raphael would content himself with a single flower, as we see in his Holy Families.

‘Large masses are the aim of great massive minds, and splashing about pigments of little triflers.

‘Much of a picture should slumber, and leave the

soul to shine forth and speak as it were, and whatever detracts from this, the main object, is wrong.'

With marvellous delicacy my master provided me with materials to improve my style. His stores of engravings, his casts, had long been at my command, but the only draperies I possessed were modern stuffs of little value. One summer afternoon, early in our acquaintance, he came into my studio followed by his servant with a bundle. This was deposited on the floor and unfastened. With delightful satisfaction my master unrolled piece after piece of rich silks and velvets woven centuries ago in Venetian looms, wrought with flowers that no modern could design, woven with threads of gold or embossed with golden flowers. Dresses that Juliet might have worn. Bits of brocade from the mantle worn by the Doge when he sat to Bellini. My master shook out each piece and threw it among others, not forgetting contrasts and harmonies. I was enchanted, but embarrassed. Was it a present? How could I accept such a treasure? He had thought of this. 'Little pupil, I do not give them to you. It would give your friends something to talk about that might annoy you. So these shall be my draperies, and I will lend you them when you like. You cannot paint beautiful pictures unless your eye is familiar with precious colour. Every part of your picture must be studied from beautiful objects.'

Under such tuition I soon was able to earn considerable sums. I had models and casts to my wish; and then gratified a fancy for old carved furniture to make my studio picturesque. I wanted a piece of tapestry to cover a certain blank wall, but was so rebuked for my

extravagance that I dared not buy it. One afternoon I looked into Mr. Merritt's study and found two pieces of old tapestry with Sabine warriors designed by Julio Romano spread out over the floor, while he was consulting with our landlord where they should be placed. He was in favour of hanging them in his study and fastening the mirrors and brackets upon them. A barbarous destruction, but he appeared quite serious, for there was no other wall to spare. Our landlord suggested hanging them in my studio, and then I observed a twinkle in the master's eye, and discovered what had all along been his intention, when he asked me if I could allow him to hang them in my studio for the present.

In the sultry August weather of 1872 Mr. Merritt sprained his foot. Then it was that his solitude and loneliness seemed most oppressive, and that I first knew the pleasure of soothing his lonely hours. Fretted with many cares, at a season too when of his circle of sincere friends hardly one was in London, he had to endure pain, and for some months absolute confinement. A boy waited on him, and was always at hand, but many times a day this messenger brought me a line: 'Will you come for a moment, Miss Lea?' And gradually I ventured to come without being asked, and found ways to make his imprisonment less irksome: to bring him flowers, to arrange his papers, to fill his pipe, to know all he wanted before he called for it. Sometimes I painted at his easel, sometimes he made little sketches to teach me principles of art, sometimes he would read to me from favourite books; oftenest I sat in my corner, opposite his place, listening to the strange stories of his life. Could I listen to such a history coldly?

‘Little pupil,’ he said once, early in our acquaintance, ‘you must not be deceived by my fondness for you. Remember I could not come through such a life without many poor friends. You cannot understand what it means to have been poor. I live, I have lived to work for a dozen poor friends and relatives. I pay the rent of three families. There is my brother with all his children, I have had to keep them for some years. Another brother has given up work now, and depends upon me. The family with whom I lived fifteen years, they have lived upon me so long that they regard it as a right. They have kept me poor, but I cannot forsake them. I must never think of marrying. If you were only a poor little beggar, or anything but a rich, extravagant American girl, I might take you to my heart. But *I won’t*.’ I knew I had no wealth to bring him, but why should I say that? Would it not be almost asking him to take me? Is it not rather too much like bargaining to say ‘Feed and clothe me, and engage to do so for ever, *then* I will love you.’ It seemed to me the risk of such a bargain would be all on his side. So we remained master and pupil for five years, five happy years.

During these five years, when his every act, I might say every thought, was known to me, his generosity was amazing. Not only did he give to those whom he cared for, but to some whom he despised, to one at least who had grossly injured him. The sums he gave, taken all together, were quite out of proportion to his earnings, and thus his pensioners soon imagined his means to be greater than they were.

No man perhaps ever won more sincere respect and affection from those who came to him as employers and

remained as friends, enjoying the originality of his conversation, and the simple nobility of his character. I should like to quote two of Professor Ruskin's letters, because they so well describe a charm of Merritt's nature.

‘Corpus Christi College, Oxford : December 1, 1872.

‘My dear Merritt,—When I got your story of a flower I put it aside for a quiet day when I should not be tired.

‘It has refreshed me this morning, being somewhat ill, and not able to see anything golden anywhere but through your young eyes.

‘It is very beautiful. Might I use it for my February Fors ?

‘Had you been a little less gently made you would have been a great painter. The world has crumbled you in its fingers, or, rather, used you as soft earth for its own purposes, but you have made many a seeming dead crocus bloom again.

‘Ever affectionately yours,

‘J. RUSKIN.

‘Henry Merritt, Esq.’

‘Bruntwood : January 19, 1875.

‘My dear Merritt,—I will be sure to give you due alarm concerning the old masters. You have given great pleasure to Carlyle by your report, and you always give much to *me* whenever you write to me. I have no other friend who says such pretty things to me, in a way that reminds me of the little courtesies of old days, when people were graceful by kind act in a letter as much

as in a quadrille, and when flattery was the naughtiest of one's faults to one's friends, never carelessness.

‘Ever affectionately yours,

‘J. RUSKIN.’

The following letter was written on learning that I had narrowly escaped shipwreck. After seventeen days on the Atlantic, during ten of which the steamer was helpless and almost hopeless, I had regained Liverpool, and started again in a few hours for America. The voyage in all was thirty-seven days.

‘London : Dec. 8, 1872.

‘My dear Pupil,—I trust that by this time you are safe, and quite recovered from your sea troubles. Reading of them made us all grieve that you were allowed to go at all until a better time. But what could be done with a self-willed lady like you are? Do not think that I was neglectful in not replying to your two letters with the Queenstown postmark upon them. Both letters were too late, having, as I am told, met with contrary winds on the ocean. I did not get either until twenty-four hours after the latest time you named for answering them. Mr. and Mrs. Easton and Mr. Hurth, to whom I told your story, were much affected by it, as you may well believe, for I never heard a sadder.

‘You are now happy, I trust, and able to smile again, and paint pretty pictures to astonish your friends by their rich colour. Paint some American beauties with their expressive mouths, and if you meet with a handsome Creole get her to sit. There is nothing like a picture of a rare type of woman, especially when the nice differences of feature are closely observed. There is ever novelty

to be seen in nature wherever you go, but few are conscious of the fact. You would like to hear the news, but what I hear is not worth troubling about, for I have not walked a quarter of a mile yet, and here I am now, with my leg on the red-cushioned chair, just as you saw me months ago. I do not despair, but the foot is at present too weak to carry an elephant. There is really nothing stirring, but I hear of a collection of pictures forming for the Royal Academy Winter Gallery. The Water Colour Institutions are all open now in Pall Mall and thereabouts, but no great novelty distinguishes them from collections of former years. The aim of the contributors would seem to be to earn money. Do not, pray, follow their example in this respect, but learn to paint well.

‘I hardly know how to account for it, but now I wish to write you a good letter, I have no ideas to put in it, or I would. I am so stupid that I surprise myself; but then, when we are past fifty we have not many reasons to be hopeful, as you have; for the young are trustful always, as it is right they should be; for to the young every succeeding day brings new thoughts and ever-brightening prospects, while the old have but to turn their faces to the wall, which is a blank more or less. I have nothing to send you of mine, for I write very uninteresting notices at this time of the year, which you would not care to read, although I feel that you have very kind regards for me, as a pupil will necessarily always have for any master who is willing to confide his art-knowledge to others. If I have ever been helpful to you, I am happy in the thought, for I know that you will become no ordinary painter in a few years; that is,

Yonkers
Hillmist



if you are careful of your contours, and not wilfully hasty, as is your wont to be.

‘I wish you and yours a merry Christmas. Kindly remember me to all, and believe me

‘Ever faithfully yours,

‘H. MERRITT.’

My master's nature speaks plainly in the following letter, which I received from him during a visit of some months to Philadelphia :—

‘54 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, W., London, England :

‘November 28, 1873.

‘Dear Pupil,—I am sure that the ocean is possessed of some strange quality which has a saddening influence on those who go down to the sea in ships. Otherwise why is it that whenever I approach salt water my heart lies dead within me, stifled as it were by the mighty flood and its ceaseless commotion which ignores all trifles ? I would hardly trust sensations and impressions born of the ‘big’ waters. Come to the reality, live among the Smiths, the Browns, and the Robinsons, scheme daily and hourly to keep pace with the rabble of life, and how different are our thoughts of the world and of one another ! Before this reaches Pine Street, Philadelphia, you will have felt the bliss of being dear to those bright, soft-eyed sisters of yours, and all that is morbid in your thoughts will cease, and instead of the old teacher and his soured existence, the example of young life will be yours. Take to the same and partake of its joys.

‘I must stop this or I shall not be equal to many more November days such as we now endure. Fogs drop down into our streets in the most insulting way, and we shudder to think what our poor will do without

the means of getting fuel this winter ; and I, who am of the poor, have no other thought just now than what I can do for the less fortunate than myself, and perhaps I have my share of misfortunes. My poor brother Joe has just been run over and terribly injured. He may, if he gets over it, remain on my books a pensioner for life. I do not mean the one who has fallen from a good estate to utter nothingness ; but a quiet steady fellow, whose wife died leaving an only girl just sixteen years old now. And so I work every day to get enough money for at least half a dozen people.

‘ I am airing your studio and repairing large pictures in it. Everything, saving that your velvet cushions are covered up, is as you left it.

‘ Of course I miss my little torment, who ought to know how much I cared for her interest, since I told her all that time would permit me of things nobody else could tempt me to sell. However, so that she acquires the calm self-possession of a master, and paints with deliberation beautiful and solemn things, which will impress the frivolous and do no end of good, my trouble taken with her will turn out a blessing to me. Good-bye for the present, learn to endure tiresome people, and do not bite your pencils in anger. I fear now that you are under the Stars and Stripes you will forget to be gentle. You did not send a word to the people here, and they seemed disappointed. They may not deserve a line, but, if we talk of deserts, we are reminded of what Shakespere said. Let me hear of you and your home and its inmates soon. Give them my love and best wishes.

‘ Ever faithfully yours,

‘ HENRY MERRITT.’



In the autumn of 1873 I again spent some months in Philadelphia, and received a few letters from Merritt so characteristic that some examples of them must be given.

‘January 1, 1874.

‘My dear Pupil,—Many thanks. Twelve canvas-back ducks reached here safely, and as fresh as possible, on Tuesday morning. Of course, everybody had a taste. The children had a party in your studio last night, and kept it up till a late hour. No harm was done to anything, save the carpet.

‘And now let me, first of all, thank your dear sister Gertrude for her most kind letter, and next, yourself, for the wonderful estimate you are so good as to form of me. I know myself well, and could contradict you on every point concerning the view you take of me in my feebleness. But this does not prevent my appreciating the ‘Yankee Gal’ and her courageous bearing, and if I could serve her I would. When she comes to England, I will get her a few lessons in drawing, which will fix her in the right rules and principles taught by Raphael himself, who was more divinely gifted with the sublime power of expression than any mortal that I ever heard of; more especially was he mighty in the power which women and little children unwittingly possess. You shall yet know the art of eloquence in lines and colours, the only language which speaks alike to all people of all climes. Your father is a convert to fine art. I think that he was right to like best the ‘Babes in the Wood,’ because the children were pretty innocent faces enough, whereas Tennyson’s heroine belongs to an

ideal world very far removed from daily life. I like best myself beautiful objects within my reach ; and so do you, or why delight so much with every look of happy sisters on their advent into a new sphere of life which to them gives every promise of happiness.

‘Tell them all that I share with them the joy which is theirs now, and will, I hope, always be theirs as long as they live.

‘I have been writing incessantly, and am very tired, so, for the present, good-bye.

‘Ever yours,

‘HENRY MERRITT.’

‘February 16, 1874. ’

‘Dear little Pupil,—I send a sketch of a very hopeful-looking morning, because I have to tell you that *all* through the late cold weather and rain I have been coughing, sans-intermission, with great violence and loss of rest, and so I have become a little depressed. You will therefore be pleased that the parts of your letters which have had reference to weddings have been a solace to me.

‘I could imagine you in a frame of mind to say only the kindest things possible and to do generous acts to *everybody*, for on such occasions most people manage to be charitable, and especially those who pursue a graceful creative art, for they find in art a life-joy denied to those who follow only a plodding craft. You have a trouble, and you create a beautiful face or a sunny landscape which wins the admiration of beholders and fills a blank in your own heart.



Dear Little Puppet

I send a batch of a very
hopeful looking morning

‘God help me! I know not what I should do without my pictures. I never had a happy home; and now I slave to keep ungrateful relatives from disgracing me by becoming paupers to sweep the streets. Compare this with dear sisters on whom has burst a beautiful prospect of earthly happiness, and then think that you too, for all I know, might be happy, and leave off biting your pencils. By the bye, I forget if I told you that I took advantage of your kindness to put pictures in your studio while mine was cleaned. It is again exactly as you left it.

‘And now, little pupil, I hope that you will write me about your studies in art, and how that you are happy in them; talk of eloquent persuasive lines and colours that reflect the hues of Paradise.

‘The Author of “His World of Troubles.”

‘H. MERRITT.’

For the following letter of this period I am indebted to a friend, who will not give his name, or even that of his work, because the letter praises it:

‘December 11, 1874.

‘My dear ——,—Were I an emperor, and you had been instigated by my court physican to set your wits to work and solace the jaded spirits of his majesty, you could not have hit my distemper more completely than you have done by your beautiful sympathetic account.

‘You might have known that my day-dreams and my nightly visions teem with Gothic, a very forest of glistening spires and pinnacles.

“Robert Dalby” tells of a scaffold-builder who carried planks and poles to the top of spires and reached the

gilt vanes in the clouds. I was with him and worked with him.

‘In those days what discoveries did I not make? Through loop-holes which barely disturbed the gloom within, I have seen strings of sleeping bats, and in darksome chambers found quaint carvings never intended to see the light. As a boy I worked alone in the gloomy cloister, and thought of the past. And all these memories you have in spirit revived. Your book is entirely in harmony with my life.

.
‘Faithfully yours,
‘H. MERRITT.’

‘August 9, 1875.

‘Dear Pupil,—Content yourself with keeping about and in the house making light sketches of herbs and flowers and weeds of the common sort. Think of a flower by Titian, like that in the Bacchus and Ariadne, and the dandelion in seed, like that in the picture of St. Catherine by Raphael. You need not wander far for materials, and you do not need active employment but repose.

‘It is true I have suffered two or three days with the atmosphere oppressing me always, but I have worked all the same.

‘To-morrow I hope to go to Hampton Court in an open carriage

‘Give my love to May, and do not prevent her enjoyment of happy England. To-morrow when she will have to flee the city of her home for shelter from the



Ye banks & braes of bonny Doon—
How can ye look so fresh & fair
How can ye chaunt ye little song,
While I'm so weary, full of care.

heat, she will call to mind the green fields of Godalming with pleasure. I have only time to make a little sketch.

‘With my best wishes,

‘Yours faithfully,

‘H. MERRITT.’

‘August 25, 1875.

‘Dear Pupil,—This little sketch should teach you how much depends upon what is called composition. In all the studies you make do not lose sight of the art of picture-making as taught by the great masters ancient and modern.

‘Thus Salvator found dainty morsels of foliage among the Alps, and Claude clumps of aspen on the plains around Rome.

‘So much for art. I despair of your noting the signs of the atmosphere and all that might enable you to keep free of coughs and indigestion. Roast simple meat, and eat a slice while hot with fresh vegetables and wholesome bread. Walk only so far as you can calculate your strength will warrant you! Give my love to May, and respects to Fräulein, and kind regards to Liutz.

‘Your affectionate teacher and monitor,

‘H. MERRITT.’

In the spring of 1874 a little sister was allowed to accompany me to London, and we then lived at Devonshire Street in an upper apartment. The two years following were full of happiness for us. In the evenings Merritt delighted to have little Marion’s company, and to invent for her romantic tales which he knew how to present in quaint and simple language.

What humour there was in his caricatures of us. Marion always appeared as a young swan, with lifted head and a sidelong look from her eye ; while I was easily recognised in a small bantam hen, looking up to the swan with a hopeless attempt at command.

He was fond at times of silent meditation, and then could tolerate no movement. Sewing he detested ! he would not allow any sort in his presence. When his cough had somewhat yielded to mild weather, he would reach down a favourite guitar, and sing delightful old ballads with an accompaniment wholly original. We kept a programme written on the wall, and constantly he would remember new old ballads, not heard since childhood, and they were added to our list. In the course of time the melodies may have become somewhat transformed, but they never were sung with more pathos. I dared not in such happy evenings bring up a word about pictures. 'Romola !' with an air of reproach, would be his only reply.

I contrived to see him in the morning at his breakfast, and during the fifteen minutes' rest afterwards, when he smoked his pipe. How wearily he always lay back in the old chair. No wonder, for all winter and spring his violent cough made rest impossible. He treated it with supreme indifference, or even with a sort of satisfaction.

'It would be impossible to cough so splendidly,' he would say, 'with weak lungs.' His old and dear friend, Dr. Bird, used every argument to induce him to take better care of his health. Once he was persuaded to try some remedies, from which he derived little benefit, and then he wrote to the Doctor :



‘My cough is no better, although I have practised it continually.’

When he discovered that he raised blood he would only use red silk handkerchiefs, so that he might not notice it. He resolutely put aside every thought of himself, and suffered for years manfully what would kill most people in a month.

In the spring of 1876 I was compelled to visit America, and to take my young sister back to our parents. It was promised me that I should return to England the following autumn. The thought of leaving him even for a few months was horrible, but there was no help. So long as I had a penny in my purse I had managed to postpone the dreadful day ; but just then I had not a penny of my own. Therefore I was reduced to the sad plight of a dutiful child, and started on the dreaded journey. My dread of it was realised ; circumstances quite unforeseen arose to prevent my return. It depended, at least, upon my own exertions to find the means, and in America, in a financial crisis such as then existed, few people were likely to buy my pictures. The Centennial Exhibition, too, had overstocked the market. The long hot summer, six weary months, when all the world are scattered through mountain resorts or along the shore, had to go by before a chance of exercising my pencil could be expected, and meanwhile I had double rents to pay in London, and for studios in America. Scarcely had I arranged one in Philadelphia, when a commission called me to New York. The kind and thoughtful tone in which my beloved master encouraged me in these trials can best be appreciated in a few of his letters.

‘54 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, W.

‘London : May 8, 1876.

‘My dear little Pupil,—Lest the newspapers I post with this should be lost, I enclose a cutting of Article No. 3. No doubt there will be much confusion in Philadelphia, and therefore you will have no time to send me too many letters about the pictures. Please confine your remarks chiefly to your own concerns and of those more immediately around you.

‘The place seems solitary now that you are away, no one knocking at my door any more. Even the ballad singers have disappeared, while the organ men sent by the Italian model are rarely heard.

‘You imagine that I shall forget you. Am I likely after all the trouble I have taken to make a painter of you? Do we plant fruit trees in order to leave them when the blossoms that are to produce peaches and apples appear? Some day you will learn to value your many precious gifts better than to surmise that anyone possessing understanding will fail to appreciate a talented girl. Those who have hearts—there are not many—will not fail to see that Anna M. Lea is also a generous girl. I saw it long ago, or I should hardly have taken the trouble to teach her to spread colours upon canvas.

‘Ever your sincere Friend,

‘HENRY MERRITT.’

‘June 6, 1876.

‘Dear little Pupil,—Above is a picture of complete repose shut in from all the world. Try and bring your mind into the same temper and frame, for I find that you already take to exciting scenes.

Faithfully yours,



‘Your letter came last night, and the newspaper this morning. Art criticisms in America are certainly meagre.

‘Julia wrote a nice sparkling letter in acknowledgment of the mournful landscape I sent. I hardly expect one from May now that she is in the Free States. Here she was a sort of prisoner. Father and mother must be proud of her. Anyhow she cost me something for jam. All the feeding and coaxing would be wasted if bestowed upon you, because you are always sighing for a perfection in your art which cost Titian a life to accomplish. Take heart and faith in the future, and all will come right. Go as much as you may in the woods, and as little as possible to the Exhibition.

‘Give my kind regards to father and mother, and all who care to hear of me.

‘“This comes hoping to find you well, as it leaves me at present” (old style).

‘Ever faithfully yours,

‘HENRY MERRITT.’

‘June 18, 1876.

‘My dear little Pupil,—In a lonely spot like this no American could survive long. There are no telegraphs, no post-boxes, no communications with the world. Yet somehow I fancy it. In such a place about fifty kinds of birds would come, and all manner of little creatures abound. Your moonlit waters and birds belong to another race and world. It would take long to grow accustomed to the sounds all new. Your liking for them proves the fact that you belong to the soil where the moon rains down a purple mist, and the oriel bird dwells

among the branches of the trees. So much for the poetical. Now for the prose. Business is at a standstill perfectly dreadful ; all the big shopkeepers look miserable. At home, the corridor with its creeping plants will be attended to. The lilies did not blossom ; a few small promises of flowers ended in nothing. This is no place for flowers, except flowers of speech. The future is a trouble to me. I therefore dwell in the present.

‘Paint as many nice faces and hands as you can ; choose subjects which you can do wholly from nature, and you will be sure to do well. The moment you begin to splash and dash with paint you paint “bunkum.” I forget how to spell the word, but you will know what I mean. The best pot boilers are the best and most irresistible pictures. Little and good. A sonnet in fourteen lines will, if perfect, as some I know, give immortality to its author. I am as well as when you left me. Most pleased with that part of your letter which refers to your health as so much improved. Kind regards to all.

‘Ever faithfully yours,

‘H. MERRITT.’

‘September 8, 1876.

‘Dear little Pupil,—You will find by reading my last, that I had anticipated something like the above, since confirmed by yours of August 25. I see how matters are with you. Become a second mother to your sisters, you will find it no easy matter to wean them. I know too well the power of the spell which these grown-up babes weave about you, and how impossible it becomes to break with the weakly. It is thus that our best aims are ever thwarted, and we become the mere servants of



Dear Little Pupil

I have only time to send you
the above recollection of "Early Days" a
reedy spot on the Cherwell, the river on
which I almost passed my days.

those about us. Since you left I have been almost altered by the constant clamour of those who have supposed claims upon me.

‘Your poor teacher has had no rest. Pictures come in daily and few go out.

‘Time will shape a future no doubt, so keep on keeping on, as I do. I am as well as usual, and that is not quite well.

‘Your friend,

‘H. MERRITT.’

‘September 26, 1876.

‘Dear little Pupil,—On the other sheet is a weary bantam, arrived at a peaceful spot, where everything speaks, or rather breathes, of repose.

‘You have a studio, model, and all sorts of materials, so there is no reason now why you should not be quiet, and quite free to go on with your work.

‘If you, in your grand way, talk of paying me for the services rendered you in your absence, you shall never have a letter or a sketch from your old teacher from that moment until the next time!

‘Your well-wisher and friend,

‘H. MERRITT.’

‘December 24, 1876.

‘Dear little Pupil,—I have only time to send you the above recollection of “Early Days,” a reedy spot on the Cherwell, the river on which I almost passed my days. Have only one outlet in the background of your portrait, or you will destroy its oneness and repose. I would

give you an illustration of this, but I am so *very* tired, owing to great exertions in preparing Exhibition of Old Masters at Burlington House.

‘I have hardly had time to eat, much less to write. Please thank Julia for her kind letter. So May has been acting Sleeping Beauty. That is a divine creature your sister, I had to lock the photograph up for fear of having it stolen by some of the artists who look in. Woolner was charmed when he beheld it.

‘The Watsons are about to write you, so I am spared the trouble of speaking in their behalf.

‘I am writing this on Christmas Eve, which falls this year on Sunday. Perhaps you know that, but to make sure, I mention the fact. A thousand good wishes.

‘I am, dear little Pupil,

‘Your affectionate adviser,

‘H. MERRITT.’

‘January 7, 1877.

‘My dear Pupil,—The little sketch is worth all the commonplace things I could recollect respecting the loss of your dear grandmother. I wish that I could have seen her.

‘You will find an intelligent appreciation at the home where this will reach you, but please do not build so many castles in the air. Only be so very earnest when you are trying to paint like Titian, or rather as well as that famous Venetian.

‘Always begin a face cautiously in low tones, and before you begin to load your canvas, make sure of your likeness, because with any failing on that point, all other labour is worth so much as the best floor-cloth. The



Light Beyond

resemblance once fixed, guard it from that wayward brush of yours, and make the light fall in the right places: for if you understand me the commencement of the process should chiefly concern the shadows, over which you must spend time in order to secure the likeness.

‘You kindly inquire after me and my health. It is about my winter’s standard. I look the same, cough the same, have the same affectionate regard for Pupil that I ever had since I beheld her.

‘I hope you gave your young people lessons in knitting and tatting, so that in future they will be able to get on very well; although it seems wrong to deprive poor people of the profits which ought to come of the making of socks, &c.—I mean those who supply the shops.

‘Ever faithfully yours (overworked),

‘HENRY MERRITT.’

‘February 9, 1877.

‘My dear Pupil,—Nobody can feel for you better than I can, and it grieves me to think that, now you are embarked on your own account, you should be beset with troubles.

‘You ought to have found letters at Ottawa which were meant to console you for the loss of your dear grandmother. There was some reason in trying to do so, but the loss you anticipated in your letter from Ottawa admits of no alleviation save that which time can and will bring you. There are griefs which only increase with years—‘as streams their channels wider wear,’—but griefs of this enduring kind usually spring from bad actions. The memory of the good can never act as thorns in the side.

‘The living have a claim on us, and while we give way to sorrow we unfit ourselves for the work of to-day. I have no time to say more now, save that you ought to have regard for yourself. You have been much thwarted by the free use you make of your sympathies. That portion of mankind who live from hand to mouth have no time for the luxury of woe. This I know well enough from experience. So please pluck up your spirit and be big and brave.

‘Your affectionate adviser,
‘HENRY MERRITT.’

‘54 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, London :
‘November 25, 1876.

‘My dear Pupil,—Here are three sketches just to remind you of Europe where you have been. You will no doubt come here again greatly improved in all ways. In health, I hope, and as a painter. The little sketches I send are made to fully realise the broader features of the scenes depicted, leaving out trivial things. Do likewise, only on a nobler scale. Seize upon the salient objects first, and make out details after you have secured an idea of what the total of a composition should be.

‘So much for art. You are still the little bantam with those children who have no imperfection. It is all very well, but my heart goes with the poor. I stand and look at the schoolboard children leaving school, and note among them many most beautiful ; and that with barely enough rags to cover them, like the children of Murillo. Love your own people, but remember those who claim to be fellow-creatures only. I say this because an artist who would paint big pictures must



needs have a big heart and a sympathising soul, like the renowned St. Christopher (whose name I formerly wrote under) who could only be induced to mingle with the least fortunate of mortals.

‘I hardly know where you may receive this letter, possibly in Canada, but wherever you may be remember me as one who despises trivial things on canvas.

‘Your affectionate friend,
‘H. MERRITT.’

After waiting for months fortune came to me all at once, and important commissions crowded upon me. Scarcely had I a chance to begin work when death snatched from us two of my dearest relatives. Grief unfitted me for painting, but the longing to see my master again gave me courage to return to it. At last, about the middle of March, I reached Liverpool. Only of late had I begun to realise the uncertainty of life, and on the lonely ocean voyage a terror grew upon me that I might not see again my dear master. As the distance between us shortened greater was my fear, until at last it ended in a joyful meeting. What a happy evening! A little festival was prepared for me. My studio in order, and lighted up, to show my last picture in the frame he had provided. My favourite plants carefully tended, primulas, crocuses, and tulips in bloom, wherever a nook could be found for them. A little supper spread for us. But all these cares were almost wasted upon me. I could only see my dear, dear master.

‘Little Pupil,’ he said, ‘we shall be married. I cannot part with you again. I am like a ship at the end of

a long voyage, after ploughing the ocean for many a year, become covered with barnacles and all sorts of queer clinging weeds. But I do not see why I should give up our happiness for the sake of ungrateful people, who only think of what money they can get from me. We can still spare something for them, but in time perhaps you will have to defend me from them. You will be happy living in a cottage, as we soon shall, when I show you what a beautiful life it can be made. You are my only true friend, we must never be separated.'

In about three weeks we were married privately in St. Pancras Church. We met in the vestry, and walked home together. Our most intimate friends were informed when we saw them. Even in this first happiness he began to speak of approaching death. 'We are too happy,' he would say, 'it cannot last. Learn to think of my death. You must accustom yourself to the idea. It appals me to think what will become of you when I am taken. Remember only to plant an elm-tree over me.'

How happy we were!—and yet, day by day, a terror grew into my joy. He suffered constantly, although his face expressed only supreme happiness. The last time he left the house was on his birthday, when we drove to Hampton Court, and spent the day in a little inn-parlour overlooking the river, and beyond the old brick palace, screened by stately elms. It was of all scenes near London that which he most enjoyed. We talked of the cottage we should have in that neighbourhood, and the quiet rest of old age: of the books he would write out of his stores of strange experience.

Another rest was in store for him!

For some days he lay between life and death; then

rallied so far that we felt safe and confident. But, so soon as he was allowed to give up the recumbent position, his weary heart refused to do its work, and surely and steadily failed.

Suffering became intense, but was never more nobly borne. His constant thought was for me. He feared my fatigue, he feared my anxiety ; but it was my great comfort that he could not spare me from him. No one else could be permitted to wait upon him, and for every trifling service he was so grateful, as though he did not expect to be tenderly nursed. 'I have borne years of loneliness,' he said, 'but happiness is too much for me.'

Almost to the last he gave each day some attention to his business. Work was pointed out for his assistants, and what they had done was brought to him for criticism. Sometimes he insisted upon touching the picture himself. Even then his suffering was so violent that it was not possible for him to see many friends who called. His patron and dear friend, Mr. William Graham, was with him every day, and Dr. Bird nursed him and watched over him with the affection of a brother. All encouraged me to hope, but I knew better than all the suffering he endured.

After a fainting spell one night early in July Merritt seemed convinced of his fate. In the morning there was a sternness, or rather firmness, in his expression that awed me. His breathing was so shallow that he could hardly move, but he shaved himself and insisted upon dressing. Then he crossed the entry to our dining-room. There he summoned his assistants, devoted friends they were, who had worked for him, the one ten the other twenty

years, and who now waited at hand every day on the chance of being useful. He insisted upon having at once their accounts for the past month, and sent me to look for any bills unpaid. He wrote cheques for all, and thought of those pensioners to whom he usually sent aid. Then for me, although he had provided me with a bank account of my own, he wrote a cheque for a large sum. I protested against it, but he insisted. These affairs settled to his mind, he returned to the bedroom. From the entry he could look down the mews through an open window. No beautiful view to most people, but he could see what he liked in anything. 'One last look,' he said, 'what a beautiful place, full of grottoes and nymphs!' In early dawn, at this season, about two o'clock, he would have the curtains drawn aside that he might gaze upon the chimney-pots. In this light they were beautiful to him. He would say, 'That is how Velasquez would have painted them.'

Among many proofs of esteem was one from Mr. W. J. Farrer, who wrote to Merritt, supposing him to be convalescent, and offered his country house for a few weeks. I read the kind letter to my husband, hoping it would inspire cheerfulness and courage. He had scarcely breath to say, 'I fear it is too late. Everything in my life has come too late. I could not buy good food and clothing until my health was ruined. Now I have the dearest wife, I cannot live to enjoy happiness.'

After a few days, as suffering increased, we spoke together once of the parting that might be.

'I am not afraid to die,' he said; 'I have been a good man.'

His only other thought was anxiety for me and to



console me. 'Do not despair. Take heart; I will try to live for your sake.'

Soon again the torture became so terrible that I cannot speak of it. To the last his mind was clear, his senses acute; only morphine injected into the veins brought a short forgetfulness. The long death-struggle lasted for hours. He held out his arm to me many times to be lifted up, and then, unable to speak, he still found strength to recognise me by gently moving his hand upon my shoulder. In eight hours he slowly breathed away, keeping his face towards mine, his eyes upon me. For ever his face in its agonised beauty floats before me. I see the world only through this pale shadow of pain and love.

Merritt died at the age of fifty-five. Mr. Frederick Willis Farrer offered a most touching mark of friendship in requesting that his friend might be buried in his vault at Brompton. I gratefully accepted the generous kindness, and there Merritt was interred. But when I felt able to realise all that had occurred, and remembered how often my beloved master had asked me to plant an elm-tree above him, and saw how impossible it was to do so at Brompton, Mr. Farrer with equal kindness permitted me to remove my husband to a ground I chose at Woking. It seems a fitter place for one who so loved fields and flowers, and the promised elm-tree is planted there.

DIRT AND PICTURES SEPARATED

CHAPTER I.

OBSCURED PICTURES.

IT has been said that the delight of a connoisseur is 'a dark, invisible, very fine old picture ;' and there can be no doubt of the existence, among admirers of the old masters, of considerable reverence for the mysterious stains and discolourations which pictures acquire by neglect, in the long lapse of years. Enthusiastic collectors will exult in the 'golden' splendour of a Claude, the 'glowing warmth' of a Cuyp, or the 'rich transparent browns' of Rembrandt, which qualities, in a large degree, are occasioned by coatings of discoloured varnishes and oils, producing upon the pictures effects similar to layers of stained glass. A celebrated critic, speaking of Sebastiano del Piombo's 'Raising of Lazarus,' in the National Gallery, grows eloquent on the dark incrustation by which that famous composition is obscured. He says, 'the figure of Lazarus is very fine and bold. The flesh is *well baked, dingy*, and ready to crumble from the touch, when it is liberated from its dread confinement to have life and motion impressed on it again.' Thus it is inferred that Sebastiano stooped to the trivial artifice of imparting an appearance of half putrefaction to the exhumed corpse. The 'baked' look of the figure is an affair of time and the critics, and not of the original painter. Did not Hazlitt overlook the

too evident fact, that the noble picture referred to is embedded beneath a thick covering, compounded of half opaque varnish, patches of modern paint, and dirt, and that the figure of Lazarus is only discoloured in the same degree as the other portions of the work? The same critic dwells rapturously on the decayed Cartoons of Raphael at Hampton Court. After describing the spirit and beauties of those divine pictures, he proceeds to account for their transcendental qualities, which he thinks 'perhaps are not all owing to genius—something may be owing to the decayed and dilapidated state of the pictures themselves,' which 'are the more majestic for being in ruins.' He delights to observe 'that all the petty, meretricious part of the art is dead in them ;' that 'the carnal is made spiritual ;' that 'the corruptible has put on incorruption ;' and that 'amidst the wreck of colour, and the mouldering of material beauty, nothing is left but a universe of thought, or the broad, imminent shadows of calm contemplation or majestic pains.' We dissent with deference from the opinions of one who so often thought justly, and always expressed himself well. But when the mind escapes from the enchanting thralldom of these imposing words, we are disposed to ask, 'Did it never occur to critics accepting these views absolutely, that if the painter had intended all these appearances of decay, and included the infirmities of age among the beauties of his design, that it was in his power to have produced them before he dismissed the work from his studio?' Doubtless, he never contemplated such effects, and we are bound to study the intention of the master, and to respect it. Is not every eminent picture-buyer jealous of the imposition of modern copies upon him as

the incontestable productions of the master? The artistic impostor—the dread of the connoisseur and the disgrace of art—owes the success of his counterfeit issues to this fashion of preserving the genuine productions in a half invisible state. Artificial discolourations and layers of dirt are to these creators of the ‘modern antique’ what night and darkness are to the highwayman and the burglar. If decay is to be trusted as the source of so much beauty, it should lead to practical results, which we never see attempted by any partisan of the theory. Whatever principle is true in theory may become the foundation of practice; but what would be said if some ingenious theorist, of a scientific turn, should haply discover some process by which the decay of pictures might be facilitated, and the picture-gazer of this age be enabled to possess himself of intellectual delights which in the ordinary course of things he would never live to enjoy? What would be said if, seized with this idea, the Trustees of the National Gallery should order the most valuable of the pictures in their charge to undergo an ordeal to get rid of their gross ‘material’ and ‘carnal’ qualities? We should soon see this theory of beauty by destruction considerably recast.

The value in which the learned Doctor Cornelius held the ‘rust, the precious ærugo,’ which clung so tenaciously to the famous shield, is not extraordinary, when contrasted with the singular affection manifested by able connoisseurs for the ‘venerable verdure’ which obscures so many *chefs-d’œuvre* of the old painters. The strange appearances of decay which that learned Doctor styles ‘the traces of time,’ and ‘beautiful obscurities, where doubts and curiosities go hand in hand,

and eternally exercise the speculations of the learned'—these awaken quite as much interest and admiration when discovered on the surfaces of old pictures as when found on half-obliterated coins and battered armour. But whoever shall employ any artifice to decay pictures, in order to realise these beauties, will soon be reminded that we keep costly Picture Galleries and National Museums, in which to *preserve* valuable remains of the Fine Arts; and, despite our theory that

‘Statues *moulder* into *worth*,’

and that pictures put off the ‘corruptible’ to put on ‘incorruption,’ we keep the day of supreme perfection as far distant as we are able.

Hogarth, being much in the company of *cognoscenti*, and hearing them continually aver that the works of the old painters were much indebted for the charms which they possessed to the mellowing influence of time, took an opportunity to venture a contrary opinion, asserting that ‘pictures only grew black and worse by age.’ Walpole, commenting upon this, sides with the collectors, saying that Hogarth could not ‘distinguish in what degree the proposition might be true or false.’ Doubtless Hogarth intended his words for those who, in his time, were affecting such unqualified admiration of rust and dirt. The painter would have admitted that colours do gradually soften in the drying; but this natural softening is a very different effect to that which is produced by a horn-like incrustation spread equally over the whole surface of the picture.

It may be said with confidence, that the charms of pictures having any pretensions to fine colouring cannot

be enhanced by this over-rated 'varnish of time'—especially those subjects which partake of a 'gay and festive' character, of which the productions of Rubens and Watteau furnish examples. The annoyance which the delicate, fantastic ladies of the Frenchman would have felt at its presence on their sparkling robes of silk and satin, is precisely what the gazer should feel when it interferes with his enjoyment of the pictures of this charming court painter; and the same may be said of the incrustation, when it hides from us the ruddy, glowing objects depicted by the luscious pencil of the great Fleming. It has been said of another painter's colours—whose pictures, from the intense religious sentiment they possess, are so well suited to the cloister—'That it would seem as if he could have dipped his pencil in the hues of some serenest and star-shining twilight;' and let it be urged that colours so pure and refined as to merit this distinctive eulogy little need the addition of a 'golden' glaze.

The great preponderance of brown colour which we observe on the pictures of Rembrandt, and the yellow or gold cast on the works of Titian, have resulted from causes in no way originating with those painters. Few masters' productions are seen to worse advantage than Titian's, and that by reason of the very effects which are said to mellow and improve them. In illustration of this, we may cite an example offered by the present writer in a letter to the 'Athenæum.' A portrait by one of the Venetian masters (which came under the writer's notice) furnished a striking example of time-mellowing. The lawn robe of the Ecclesiastic, precisely and delicately pencilled, with a century's dirt upon it, is not like lawn,

but like sackcloth. Its innumerable small folds and indentations—its chaste, lily-like whiteness and violet-hued shadowings—are all buried and lost. His holiness has no longer the fiery eye of the serpent. The emerald stone on the shrivelled finger is no longer lustrous. The clean, elaborate grey beard is a fiction ; the truth of the carnations a matter of faith ; and the ample cape of crimson velvet has sunk into a coarse cloth of sober brown.

Granting to admirers of richly-toned pictures that old oils and varnishes sometimes produce pleasing effects in parts of the foregrounds in sunny pictures, yet the impropriety of preserving them, even on such portions, cannot be doubted, when we reflect that neither Claude nor Cuyp, nor any painter, is to be justly credited with the creation of beauties which are the result of chance ; for chance never formed part in any great artist's calculation of effects. Reflection brings us to believe that the slightest film on a fine picture is an undoubted evil. Every good picture, no matter what the subject—whether figures or landscape, or both combined—suffers more or less in proportion to the extent of its obscuration. An idea of distances, and the appearances of remote objects, can only be realised by a skilful management of air tints. Truth is as much obscured in a picture by the corruption of these tints as in linear perspective by the perversion of the lines.

The horn-like glazing of old varnish and oils must needs defile all the refinements which constitute a fine landscape. Nor is the hateful incrustation less hurtful in other portions of the picture. Its pernicious influence is alike traceable on the boldest parts of near

objects. The 'purple tinge which the mountain assumes as it recedes or approaches; the grey moss upon the ruin; the variegated greens and mellow browns of foliage'—in short, the colours in every part of nature, suffer alike from the much-admired 'varnish of time.' In historical pictures, the nicer points, which are the evidence of mastery, are alike involved. The various distinctions of colour in age and in sex, the 'bloom of youth and the wan cheek of sickness,' are not spared. The 'golden' compound is permitted to reduce each and all into one level tone; and cheerfulness and gloom, hope and despair, the times of the day and the seasons of the year, all wear the same look of sadness when beheld through the smoked glass of the picture-worm; for there are picture-worms as well as 'book-worms.'

CHAPTER II.

DURABILITY OF PICTURES IN OILS.

THE complimentary language of Pope to Jervas, the portrait painter, in the following couplet—

'Beauty, frail flower, which every season fears,
Blooms in thy colours for a thousand years,'

might be applied to many of the old painters with considerable show of truth. It is no uncommon thing, on cleaning pictures which have been painted two, three, and even four hundred years, to discover the colours fresh and beautiful as when they left the palette. The

flower pieces of John Van Huysum, Mignon, Seghers, and De Heem, yet vie with nature in brightness of tints. While penning this, the author has before him a work by Seghers, composed of a few white and red roses interwoven with an ivy wreath, side by side with some roses fresh from the garden, placed in a sunny window, so as to have the shadows of a dark grove, at a short distance beyond, for background ; and such is the truthfulness and tenderness of the flowers in the picture, so little are they injured by time, that art and nature live side by side, and art seems to derive advantage by the rivalry. Van Huysum's vase of flowers at Dulwich College (the one in which the blue tint predominates) could never have been more perfect in respect to its colours than at the present time. Tints of the utmost conceivable brightness and delicacy are yet perceptible to the naked eye, and are even enhanced when viewed through a magnifying lens of great power. There is a vase of flowers by Mignon at the Hague, in which the dew-drops have a diamond-like freshness, and reflect the delicate hues of a warm sunbeam which falls upon the flowers and displays a number of insects 'clothed in rainbow and in fire.' The connoisseur is familiar with pictures by Carlo Dolci—of lovely Madonnas and penitent Magdalens, with pale marble faces and tearful eyes—which pictures, for freshness and solidity, might still bear comparison with any pictures similar in style of yesterday's painting. In contrast with the enamelled softness of the Italian, we have crowds of mythological deities and personages of every description from the pencil of Rubens. Fair, round, Cyprian queens, in loosely flowing crimson robes, accompanied by sportive

Cupids, wing their airy flights in chariots of silver and gold, drawn by fairy-like doves or graceful swans. The glowing limbs of the love-gods and goddesses, the bright plumage of the birds, contrasted with the azure sky and purple clouds, appear still in all the depth and richness of the rose and purity of the lily—while the gorgeous display of Vulcanic skill, the silver and gold, present no sign of dimness; on the contrary, time seems to have imparted to the colours of the great Flemish artist a purer and deeper lustre, a lustre and purity which pictures at first seldom possess. One might enumerate in every school pictures which are instances of high preservation. We still contemplate the pride and beauty of Spain in the virgin tints of Velasquez and on the canvases of Vandyke, as in a glass—we compare the still fairer women of England, who, if they exceeded in beauty the transcripts of the courtly Vandyke, must have been more than humanly beautiful. Here still the mild radiance of the costly pearl reveals the dark recesses of the silken robe, or glitters like morning dew on the soft folds of luxuriant tresses. The glare of colour and its grossness have departed—but over all there still lingers an intense beauty, a life-light warmth and transcendent sweetness.

The juicy, luscious look in the colours of Flemish and Dutch masters is not owing to the presence of liquid oil still in the colours, for in the process of drying, the oil in which the colours were ground found its way to the surface, whence it has subsequently been removed, and its place supplied by varnish. Albert Dürer's pictures are still remarkable for a certain juicy freshness, in contradistinction to what is called the 'brick

tone,' and it is evident this master's works are as hard and dry as enamel. The fact is, with respect to colours, when laid on in cool, tender tones, in perfect imitation of natural freshness, it is not, and it ought not to be, necessary to their permanent truthfulness that they should always retain an actual moisture. For instance, a dew-drop by a Dutch painter will always look like a dew-drop, however hard and dry the colours may become.

Look at the best preserved pictures of Jacob Ruysdael. Their calm, soft airiness, subdued sunlights, and quiet shades, still possess all we can conceive of intense beauty. The pictures of Ruysdael are as opposite, in their simple chasteness, to the splendid allegories of Rubens, as the mellow notes of a solitary flute to the outburst of an orchestra. Yet Ruysdael's representations of woods, lanes, villages, waterfalls, and scenes on the ocean, have not, as far as we can guess, been despoiled of a single charm. Again, look into the interiors of Adrian Ostade ; you may almost guess the hour of the day with no other guide save the lights, reflections, and shadows. Thus you imagine in one picture it is three o'clock on a summer afternoon, and the boor on the ale-house bench is dozing over his after-dinner cup. Or, in another picture, in which the painter has represented himself at work, that it is early morning, by the cheerful sunlight which steals so calmly into the apartment ; you feel the desire to step across the room and look through the old-fashioned window into the garden. You feel sure there is a garden without, nay, that it is the month of June, and that the painter's roses are in full bloom. Such are the nice distinctions of light, shade,

and tint yet preserved in the pictures of Adrian Van Ostade.

These instances of durability of colours in the works of the old painters are taken almost at random. The same quality would be found to exist in the greater proportion of pictures in any choice collection. The earliest specimens of Italian pictures in distemper are mostly very solid and pure in colour—that is, where a direct cause for their decay, such as gross exposure, has not existed. The pictures of Taddeo Gaddi, in the National Gallery, present an instance of colours which have survived the influence of time, through a period of nearly five hundred years. In the representation of ‘Saints in Glory,’ those early pictures display a great variety of colours, and frequently very striking and beautiful effects of sunlight. The blues and reds have often an enviable degree of purity, depth, variety, and force, even when compared with less ancient productions.

It is commonly observed that portions of old paintings are in good preservation, while other parts of the same pictures are almost obliterated, the obliterations having been occasioned either by accident, neglect, or wilful bad treatment. The Cartoons of Raphael, at Hampton Court, are a painful case in point. If the whole series of that work had been preserved, as, by chance, some favoured parts have been, it is clear that the whole would now be almost as perfect as when they left the master’s pencil.

CHAPTER III.

ANTIPATHY TO PICTURE RESTORATIONS.

IN the spring of 1854, on the abatement of the controversy on picture restoration, the author wrote the following protest against the unphilosophical spirit in which the controversy had been conducted.

If the apparent verdict of public opinion is to be credited, the picture restorers' art is abolished in England. The restorers are in danger of being driven from our public galleries. These unostentatious conservers of the works of genius are described as 'picture rats'; their studies are styled 'shambles'; their careful and patient manipulations, 'systematic and wanton destructiveness.' In these controversies the non-restorationists always assume that cleaning pictures means no less than scrubbing out the pictures themselves—repairing small blemishes they regard merely as a pretext for repainting entire works; lining, battening, cradling, and transferring have received no sort of recognition. But will not this judgment suffer reversal when the public shall become practically informed upon it? Vituperation in art is no more likely to produce lasting conviction or intelligent satisfaction than in other party controversies. A discussion of critics which has triumphed by assuming an utter want of conscientiousness, reason, devotion, or skill on the part of their opponents (the restorers) can never retain its victory—unless art controversies are privileged to be conducted without discrimination or justice. Take the matter in merely a popular point of view—for the

appeal lies from the critics to the people. Does it stand to common reason that the dark, unsightly blotch on the serene sky is preferable to the subtlest imitation of the true tint which the ablest artist can produce? Are the soft shadows broken up and disfigured by patches of ghastly white (pieces having fallen out, laying bare the ground)? We are not to stop the cavities with binding cement and tint the eye-sores into harmony with the rest, but submit to contemplate the picture under the distracting influence of these disfigurements. If the panel has become rent, we are to let it remain until the crack becomes widened into a chasm. In many instances a century will suffice to render every thread of the canvas which supports the masterpiece sufficiently brittle to crumble to dust at the slightest touch, and it has only been by lining old canvases upon new that the chief pictures of the great masters now hang on our walls entire. It is rare to find an old canvas picture which has not received the benefit of lining—and not unfrequently the process has several times been repeated. To line a picture properly is to renew the lease of its existence for a century. A corresponding care is indispensable to the preservation of old pictures painted on wood. Through the labours of the ever-active tooth of the worm, and other agents, few works of the great Roman master would have descended to these times but for their timely transfer from the worn-out timber on which they were painted to other and sounder material.

Mr. Buchanan informs us that M. Hacquin, of Paris, transferred the chief pictures of Raphael, including the ‘*Madonna del Pesche*,’ the ‘*Elizabeth receiving the Virgin*,’ the famous work known as the *Pearl of Raphael*,

the 'Holy Family,' in which the angel scatters flowers, and the well-known picture entitled 'St. Cecilia,' together with the 'Martyrdom of St. Peter,' by Titian. These pictures were not placed in the hands of the renovator until their 'utter ruin' became the only alternative—and thus were these *chefs-d'œuvre* of art rescued from the dust. The large picture in our National Gallery, by Sebastian del Piombo (on the authority of Mr. John Landseer), was found to need transferring. And let it not be overlooked, that hundreds of old painters painted on the same kind of timber as Raphael, and that their works have suffered from the same casualties, and, in important cases, received the same treatment. Services of this kind may be appreciated without the possession of a profound knowledge of painting.

'If neither brass nor marble can withstand
The mortal force of Time's destructive hand,'

it is easier to ascertain the liabilities of mere canvas and timber.¹

The author being on a visit to an enthusiastic collector of pictures, and observing many valuable specimens of the old schools in a very dilapidated condition, took occasion to elicit his opinion with respect to the restoration of damaged pictures, and of the persons usually employed to repair them. It was at once evident that the very mention of 'restoration' was sufficient to disconcert the ardent lover of the picture art.

'Sir,' said he, 'I am happy to say there is not a picture in my collection which has been cleaned and repaired.'

¹ Author's letter, 'Athenæum,' No. 1371.

Of this there was no want of proof. Some of the early Italian pictures were chipped, and large pieces, loosened by heat or damp, had dropped from the panels, in which worms, the growth of a warmer clime, had been busy for centuries. Our collector, being asked if he considered restoring old pictures advisable under extreme circumstances, prescribed extreme penalties for any one who should have the temerity to entertain the idea.

‘Could anything be more absurd,’ he insisted, ‘than for a modern dauber to scrub, plaster up, and repaint an old picture?’

‘Certainly not.’

‘Very well, then,’ continued he, ‘would you have some image maker commence operations on the Elgin marbles, wash and scrub them, plaster up the chinks, replace the absent limbs, remodel the obliterated features, and, in a word, restore them? What would you think of such a proceeding? How great would be your indignation! How would you mourn the loss of Phidias, and curse the miscreant who could so abuse the sublime productions of that Athenian chisel. Thus should I feel if some officious hand, some restorer, should attempt to practise this remorseless craft upon yonder noble specimen—the gem of my collection—a Leonardo da Vinci.’

As respects fragments of ancient sculpture, the views of our enthusiast possess some show of reason, but are, at the same time, full of exaggeration; while the comparison between old pictures and ancient sculptures is far from being happy. If the lost member of a mutilated Apollo could be found, there could be no difference of

opinion as to the propriety of its resuming its original position. If a Venus stood complete in every limb, in good preservation throughout, with the exception that some unfortunate blow had struck out one eye, in consequence of which blemish the whole statue was affected, and its influence half destroyed—what objection would there be, could some modeller replace the absent member so cleverly that all traces of the injury should disappear, and the figure again possess its full and complete effect? Surely no one could object to such a course being taken? But because the eye could be replaced (the other remaining to test its accuracy), it by no means follows that if the nose were lost that feature could be replaced with equal felicity, for, although men of taste might venture a shrewd guess as to the kind of nose the face once possessed, and sculptors might realise their conception, yet for all that there would be wanting the proof by comparison present in the case of the eye; and where doubt commences interference with the original work should cease, in deference to the original artist. However well founded a conjecture might seem, it were far better to rest with the mutilated form than to risk an absolutely supposititious addition to the fragment. As a matter of speculation, the restoration of a broken figure may be accomplished without risk to the original remnant simply by making a mould of it, and adding the missing portions to the *cast*. Here lies the difference betwixt pictures and statues in respect to their restoration.

We now take an example of the picture art. We have before us an elaborate specimen by Roger of Bruges, representing a Christian knight at his devotions.

Those who have seen the best pictures by this master must have been struck by their singular lustre. The present work has all the luminous appearance of ancient glass windows found in Gothic churches. These beautiful qualities in our example are disfigured by certain absolute blemishes, the most prominent of which arise from four squares of the tessellated pavement, on which the knight is standing, having fallen out, leaving the oak panel visible in the place; another portion of the work has likewise disappeared, separating the long handle of the spear. The moment the eye is directed to the picture, the whole attention is riveted on these two blemishes. It is in vain that you attempt to realise the picture as a whole, such as it appeared in its perfect state. The first thing that enters the mind of the spectator is how may those blemishes be remedied? The answer is ready, for the remedy is simple. Some able artist must restore the lost portions of the tessellated floor and the spear. This is not a difficult task, while it is a perfectly safe operation, not involving a particle of the original remains. The restorer has the same aids as the modeller in remodelling the eye in the Venus. He proceeds by filling with cement the large holes whence the pieces have dropped; after this, the cement is scraped level with the surface of the picture; and then the artist proceeds to sketch and colour the parts to match those adjoining in form and colour, accomplishing this so accurately in tint and texture that the keenest eye may never after discover where the injuries have been. No one will deny the practicability of making restorations of this nature, and surely they are such as not even the original painter would be disposed to reject.

Having shown how large repairs may be accomplished without perverting the intention of the master, we will see what can be done for the removal of numerous lesser defects. Suppose the picture chosen for illustration to be differently disfigured. A small worm (common to old timber) has hollowed out the panel, and perforated the picture. Thus in the scarlet robe of the knight there are not less than twenty small round holes, six in the face, and many more in the various parts of the representation, making in all about a hundred. If it were practicable to fill up a cavity of the size of four squares of the tessellated floor, it might seem an easy matter to fill up tiny holes no larger in circumference than small shot. Insignificant as these small worm holes may appear singly, a hundred of them dispersed over a surface of twenty-four inches by sixteen are sufficient to have a very damaging influence. Yet these holes may be filled and tinted by the fine point of a sable pencil, so as to mingle the specks with the neighbouring colours, thus restoring the painting to its original completeness. It will be borne in mind that the whole of the processes described and recommended are performed, not on the work of the master, but over cavities. What has been advanced respecting these small openings made by worms, and their repair, holds good also of other injuries to which pictures are liable. Cracks, rents, and fissures may all be remedied by the same process. There are scarcely any old paintings which have not received from time to time attentions of this kind. One would think that such services rendered to art would need no justification. Nor indeed would any defence have been necessary, had it not happened that

unskilful and impatient hands have often been employed to make these essential reparations—who, instead of confining themselves within bounds to the particles of damage, to save time, or to hide their inability to match the colours, have painted over whole works. Proceedings of this unscrupulous nature have been frequent and have come to throw discredit on the art of restoration ; and the able, conscientious restorer suffers in the general censure.

Mr. Lance, the eminent fruit painter, was ‘instructed by the Keeper of the National Gallery to restore the “Boar Hunt” by Velasquez.’ Mr. Lance (before a Committee of the House of Commons) thus described the injuries in the picture of the ‘Boar Hunt,’ which he was commissioned to repair :—‘One portion on the right hand—as large as a sheet of foolscap—of the picture was entirely bare. In fact, more than half the picture had to be restored.’ Witness ‘had not seen the picture before it was damaged,’ nor had he had ‘any plate to aid him in his restoration.’

It is an unaccountable error to set aside as worthless the fragment of a noble picture like the ‘Boar Hunt’ ; and surely repainting such a work is scarcely more to be preferred than its destruction. We justly attach great importance to mutilated statues—we do not discard an imperfect frieze ; and there is no reason why fragmentary examples of the pencil should not be valued in a corresponding degree. It must be evident that the attempt to restore a picture half effaced ought never to have been made. Picture restoration has its limits. Mr. Lance had no engraving to aid him in his restoration of the said picture ; nor, indeed, had he more than

the merest conjecture of the appearance of the picture before it had become injured. Hence, in restoring more than half, he overstepped the defensible limits of restoration, and chance usurped the place of law. In such extreme cases of injury the safe rule is, not to exceed such mechanical appliances as refer simply to the preservation of the fragment, as a fragment. The restorer might venture to tint in the damaged portions matching the original ground colour ; thus leaving blanks, comparatively inoffensive, as if the master had desisted from his work, deferring certain portions to be completed on a future occasion.¹

Not a few instances are recorded of eminent painters who have attempted to immortalise themselves by painting on the canvases of the old masters. It was with the deepest indignation that Barry beheld an Italian repainting—the famous wreck at Milan—of the ‘Last Supper,’ by Leonardo da Vinci. Carlo Marratti took upon himself to insert three Cupids in an ancient picture of Venus found in the gardens of Sallust. West did more than was necessary to the ‘Raising of Lazarus,’ by Sebastiano del Piombo. Sometimes whole collections undergo a sort of repainting. Shelley records an instance. Travelling in Italy, he arrived at a convent just as the village plumber, glazier, and painter, was withdrawing his workmen from their task of touching up the old masters, which operation had been included in the contract for renovating the paint and whitewash of the holy edifice. Instances like this last are but too common in secluded parts of Catholic countries, where poverty and ignorance accompany the possession of the

¹ Author's letter in the ‘*Athenæum*.’

rarest treasures of art. The difficulty is to understand how a modern painter of any reflection can commit the blunder of supposing that an old picture is worth anything after having been daubed over by a foreign hand.

CHAPTER IV.

PICTURE CLEANING.

CLEANING pictures is a complicated and serious matter. It is a subject to be approached with caution. The operations necessary cannot be so well defined as can those relating to artistic repairs. However, a distinguished senator, Mr. Drummond, in a speech delivered in the House of Commons, July 1, 1854, thus defines what he considered to be the popular method of cleaning the works of the old masters:—‘They (the Government) bought pictures, and with a pound or two of pumice stone, set themselves to rub them all out.’ This summary mode of treating the question of picture cleaning is open to the same objections as the process it condemns.

Is it possible to clean old *dirty* pictures with beneficial results, and without injury to the original tints and touches? ‘No,’ exclaims ‘A Tory in Art,’ in the ‘Times’; ‘it is as idle to talk of restoring a picture to what it was, as to try and push back the iron hand of time. We must make up our minds to put up with a certain amount of dirt, and study the works of departed

genius through the warm haze of time.' Much may we profit by the contemplation of delicate beauties—as they appear through a dark crust of dirt! We may venture the assertion that the old masters would be the first to object to the present dingy condition of their productions. The questions here to be asked are, 'Did the old painters calculate that their pictures would come to need cleaning?' and 'Did they make any provision to that end?' Certainly they did. When oil painting first came into use, one of its useful virtues, as noted by the painters of the time, was, that it would *wash*. Long before Italian pictures were remarkable for correct drawing or harmonious colouring, painters had manifested anxiety for the future preservation of their works. Antonio da Messina, about the year 1494, seeing an oil picture of John Van Eyck's at Naples, and perceiving that 'it might be washed with water without suffering any injury,' was so satisfied of the advantages of oil painting over the old method of colouring in distemper, that he immediately set out for Bruges, and there, by presents and services, succeeded in prevailing on John Van Eyck to divulge his precious secret. It is recorded that the art of painting in oil thus found its way into Italy. Anyhow, there is no want of evidence that the early Italian painters were desirous that their pictures should be so painted that they might afterwards be kept clean and sightly. We find the venerable Leonardo da Vinci speculating on a method of painting a picture 'that will last for ever.' This durability was to be ensured by a layer of glass placed over the picture, so as to preserve it from the action of the air. We find varnishes of some sort in repute as far back as the year

1410, after which time they came into general use, and have continued so to the present day.

When we wish to preserve a print with its white margin from dust, we place a glass over it, and there is no doubt that painters, ever since the invention of oil painting, have been accustomed to varnish their pictures with a view to the preservation of the colours. There can be no question of the long and general use of varnishes, or of the one sole reason for their use.

Had varnishes always kept as hard, clear, and durable as glass, the preservation of the works of the old painters had been an easy matter; but, unfortunately, the colours of many of the finest pictures are rendered almost invisible by the discolouration and cracking of the varnishes themselves. The simple removal of these injurious incrustations is the work of the modern picture cleaner.

CHAPTER V.

THE VARNISH GLAZE THEORY.

THE chief and most plausible of the numerous objections which have been urged against the practicability of cleaning pictures, turns upon the possibility of injuring a *glaze* alleged to have been commonly employed by the old painters. In the 'Times' controversy on this subject in 1852, 'An Artist' made the following remark:—'The process of painting a picture which is the most difficult is the final glazing. Indeed, it is the only part which absolutely requires the hand and eye of the

master.' Thus, 'An Artist' would have us believe that Raphael is famous more by virtue of his colouring and *chiaro oscuro* than his drawing. We apprehend that pictures of the Roman master challenge our admiration by virtue of very different qualities than mere tone, or richness, or even harmony of colouring. Rather might it not be said that Raphael's pictures will still command their high place when the tints and glazing are faded away, and only the 'dim, dreamlike forms' remain?

'An Artist' may have been thinking of the Flemish school. If so, who for a moment imagines that Rubens' masterpiece, the 'Descent from the Cross,' in the Cathedral of Antwerp, owes its influence to a 'glaze?' The master speaks in every touch of the pencil, and the timid hand of the pupil is nowhere to be seen. Even the pictures by Vandyke which hang around it dwindle into shadows by comparison. It may, indeed, be doubted if the 'Descent from the Cross' was ever glazed in the manner described. To those who have inspected the picture, the various colours appear to have been laid on with a bold, light, fearless, flowing hand—each touch in the right place, with little after-toning, softening, or blending. We have, in some sort, the authority of Rubens himself for asserting that the 'glaze' (which 'An Artist' thinks the only part of the process of painting a picture 'requiring the hand and eye of the master') was by Rubens seldom employed. Rubens in the process he has so elaborately described makes no mention of a final 'glaze.' He speaks of 'decided touches' as the final 'distinguishing marks of a great master,' by which he cannot possibly mean the kind of toning or colouring in varnish which 'An Artist' de-

scribes. If a painter requires rich, transparent crimson, he produces it by washing transparent lake over a light tint, previously prepared and become dry. This, properly speaking, is 'glazing,' and is certainly not usually regarded as the last and final process. The greater proportion of the colours in a picture of the school of Rubens would prove to be thus obtained. This process of producing luminous effects of light, shade, and colour, constitutes the entire process of painting a fine picture in oil, and requires 'the hand and eye of the master,' from first to last, to weigh well the nature of the ground tints over which transparent colours are intended to be passed.

The more skilful the artist the less need is there for scumbling, toning, or any final operation to unite the component parts into a 'whole.' The skilful artist conceives and executes each part of his design, so that consistency shall be the result, without the necessity of toning down one colour and heightening another, or of painting out portions and supplying others, practices which, when common, mark the indecision, or caprice, or inability, of the amateur, rather than the progressive process of the master.

The amateur stands in frequent need of erasing false lines and ill-matched tints; wanting foresight, he is necessitated to resort to all kinds of trickery to harmonise the bits and patches of his compositions. Compositions which present the finest effects of colour are usually those in which the tints (as in the 'Descent from the Cross' at Antwerp) are left undisturbed in virgin purity, bespeaking spontaneity of thought and action, the hand having obeyed the warm impulse of the

imagination. Where the work of an incompetent journeyman is to be foisted on a patron for the master's production, it becomes necessary for the master to do something to ensure the success of the imposition. Hence, the main body of paint being laid on by the underling, the more dexterous hand is called into requisition to correct and patch, to erase and blot, to darken and lighten, as may be needed—in fact, to tinker a bad picture, so that it will at least pass muster with overpartial and credulous collectors. From this miserable fashion (sometimes resorted to) of supplying the market with the works (?) of popular painters has sprung the belief entertained by 'An Artist' that masters of renown *always* leave the work to their pupils, and take the credit to themselves.

The 'Times' correspondent not only infers that all the old masters used a glaze in the completion of their pictures, he also determines the composition of the said glaze, as we learn from the following extract. Speaking of the process of picture cleaning, he says:— 'It does not consist in merely removing the dust and dirt that may have accumulated on the surface of a picture, but is the taking off a coat of chilled or discoloured varnish;' and he adds—'But what will take off *one coat of varnish* will take off *another coat of varnish* immediately underneath *the first*, into which a little transparent colour has been added [infused].'

Allowing for a moment that this glazing was always resorted to, the theory of glazing oil pictures with varnish colour is not likely to have been much practised, as the joint use of oil colour and varnish colour, the one immediately upon the other, necessarily results in dis-

union and cracking of the surface. It is commonly asserted that Francis Mieris and Gaspard Netscher finished their pictures in a varnished medium, and the singular transparency and smoothness of their productions would seem to bear out the assertion. De' Piles (the chief authority in the matter) thus describes the Netscher practice:—'When he (Netscher) intended to give the last hand to his piece, he rubbed it over with varnish which did not dry in two or three days; and *during that time he had leisure to manage his colours over and over to his liking*; those especially that, being neither too hard nor too liquid, were the more easily united to those which he added anew.' Now, it is a characteristic of *slow-drying* varnishes that they dry exceedingly hard, and that, *once dry*, they are altogether as difficult to dissolve. Properly speaking, the Netscher varnish was not varnish at all. Anyhow, a coat of brittle mastic, or common dirt, might be removed from pictures so painted without risk. De' Piles is borne out by a practical view of the case. It would have been simply impossible for Netscher to have handled an almost inconceivably fine pencil if he had employed a stubborn, quick-drying liquid to moisten his colours. Thus the danger in cleaning a picture which 'An Artist' fears is only contingent on certain conditions. If a picture is varnished with the same varnish as that used to complete the picture, then cleaning would be dangerous indeed. Such instances would form the rare exceptions, rather than the general rule. Why are pictures almost always varnished with mastic? Not only to brighten the tints, and to preserve them from dirt and atmospheric changes, but chiefly, as every artist is

aware, on account of the practicability of removing mastic from oil colours without their being injured by the operation of the removal. The only condition being that the oil colours shall have become thoroughly hardened before the varnish is applied, in order to prevent its too close incorporation with the colours.

This varnish glaze theory was selected as the most critical point for testing the possibility of picture cleaning; and it can be confidently asserted that the difficulty and risk said to attend the removal of varnish from the surfaces of pictures do not present themselves in those very pictures where risk is most to be expected—to wit, in those of the Netscher class.

Few restorers will attempt to clean pictures not originally intended to bear the necessary process. Painters, with few exceptions, qualify their pictures for such contingencies. There are some who have slighted precautions of this kind; but it has always been a source of regret when fine pictures have been found disqualified to undergo what must ever be considered an essential operation—if the eye has to be gratified and the understanding satisfied.¹

‘An Artist’ cites the current practice of the Continent in support of his varnish and colour ‘glazing theory.’ Thus, he says—‘It is well known that many pictures, attributed, and justly too, to certain artists, were painted, except *this last glaze*, by their pupils. This practice prevails on the Continent to the present day.’ ‘An Artist’ further informs us that the performance of this last glaze ‘Rubens or Delacroix would not think of entrusting to his favourite *élève*.’ One would

¹ Author’s letter, ‘Athenæum,’ No. 1374.

certainly conclude that the pupil who had accomplished all but the final 'glaze' of a picture, and was then entrusted to *add that*, might justly lay claim to the entire production. Is it reasonable to suppose that a master, however expert, could take up the crude performance of a pupil, and metamorphose it into a masterpiece by the aid of varnish, into which 'a little transparent colour has been infused'? The fact is, the class of goods referred to, being the joint work of master and man, are commonly very well known, and very little valued, by distinguished judges. As in Rembrandt's case, they are detected and condemned. Rubens was not the artist to deprive a pupil of his rights. Animals, landscapes, and still-life inserted in his pictures by contemporary painters, were always publicly ascribed to those painters. So with Raphael. He allotted certain compartments of work to pupils of suitable talent. Thus in the Vatican, Polidoro had the friezes to execute. It is easy to charge great men with unjust practices. But the old masters are not likely to have much followed a rule which could only have been unjust alike to their patrons, their pupils, and to themselves. To talk of the practice of 'the Continent,' is taking a wide latitude, and seems to imply the possession of vast information. This uniformity of practice in continental studios we take to be of a piece with the country bookbinder's notion of uniformity, who, being requested by a gentleman to bind a large number of books in a uniform style, replied—'Leave them to me, sir; and depend upon it there shall not be two alike.'

CHAPTER VI.

STANDARD PICTURES.

THE number, variety, and condition of pictures by the old masters would seem to leave no hope of accomplishing their classification ; but, in other subjects of scientific inquiry, much greater difficulties have been surmounted, and distinct departments prescribed. What is wanted is an analysis and classification of pictures for the use of the restorer, to the end that he may proceed with his work with precision. Hitherto, in the absence of such a guide, his operations have been too much at the mercy of chance. It is quite possible to determine the peculiarities of certain pictures which constitute them the representatives of a class for the special purpose of the cleaner. As an illustration, we will take Backhuysen, who, as a painter of sea pieces, ranks with Vandevelde. The difference in quality of execution between these two painters is not great, but they exhibit marked dissimilarity of style. Both present the same subject effectively, but by a different process, as respects the manner of laying on the colours, and in the retention or rejection of minutiae. Vandevelde delights in details, and prides himself on his seamanship with all a sailor's coquetry ; he individualises the perfect model of a ship, defining and elaborating, from his familiar recollections, more than even a sailor's eye can seize at a glance : he supplies what distance would obscure, or storm and battle confound and obliterate. Backhuysen,

on the contrary, while he betrays no ignorance of a ship's physiognomy, is content to realise the somewhat broader and more prominent features of his subject. Backhuysen's ships roll heavily, and pitch deeply, and founder fearfully, in the gale or in battle. His pictures look real, and full of motion. For richness of invention, fullness, and completeness of effects, he rivals Vandewelde. Yet, perfect as is the touch of Backhuysen, and complete as are his effects, in minute mechanical dexterity of execution, and in delicacy of tint, he is altogether exceeded by Vandewelde, who, as a portrait painter of ocean life, has no rival. Vandewelde's sea pictures are, in a manner, so comprehensively expressive that they may be said to include all other pictures of the kind.

The lesson to be derived from this comparison is, that in cleaning pictures by these two masters, the distinctive method of working employed by Vandewelde should be specially understood, for the reason that the means and method which would safely clean a picture by Backhuysen, would destroy a work by Vandewelde, because of its greater delicacy and excessive minuteness. The process which would remove dirt from the more delicate picture would perhaps answer in all respects for the bolder or coarser. It must be evident that a general rule *can* be drawn for the practice of restoration. In the instance of marine pictures, those examples which contain the greatest amount of refinement of execution in drawing, light, shade, and colour, must be taken as the basis of study. A knowledge of every picture to be operated upon is indispensable, and this would be soonest attainable by the restorer making

himself thoroughly acquainted with the distinctive character of the most intricate and perfect works of each class. A knowledge of the works of Vandewelde would not suffice, perhaps, to qualify a restorer to handle all other sea pictures; but if choice were made of one master's works to serve as the groundwork of investigation, perhaps no artist's are better than Vandewelde's for this purpose.

Take another example, of a somewhat opposite kind, in the pictures of Rubens and Vandyke. It will be inferred that the pictures of Vandyke should serve as a study for a class of pictures painted on principles taught by Rubens. Rubens describes the process of laying on colours which he himself practised, thus:— 'Begin by painting in your shadows lightly, taking particular care that no white is suffered to glide into them: white is the poison of a picture, except in the lights; if once your shadows are corrupted by the introduction of this baneful colour, your tones will no longer be warm and transparent. It is not the same in the lights, they may be loaded as much as you think proper; provided the tones are kept pure, you are sure to succeed in placing each tint in its proper place, and afterwards by a light blending of brush or pencil melting them into each other, without tormenting them; and on this preparation may be given those decided touches which are the distinguishing marks of a great master.'

The effects of these instructions may be traced in the works of Rubens' best pupil, Vandyke. The master furnished the style, the pupil perfected it; the master drew the fearless and flowing outline, the pupil, in his works, corrected it of some of its extravagances. A

similar distinction may be seen in the colouring of the two painters; Vandyke (for his great works) spread his palette with the same colours as Rubens, laid on the tints by the same process, but more sparingly, using a smaller pencil, giving them the same pure, unsullied look, never 'breaking' nor 'torturing' them; every touch right to its purpose. The rule to be drawn from a knowledge of these two painters is the same as that drawn from Backhuysen and Vandevelde—*i.e.*, the necessity of an acquaintance with the most intricate and delicate pictures of each class. The process that would clean a picture by Rubens might ruin a picture by Vandyke, but the hand that has touched Vandyke without injury, will 'restore' Rubens without danger.

Admitted the restorer should be guided in his operations by the study of set standards from each class of pictures, selected on the principle described, the difficulty of deciding on the proper picture would be very trifling. A little reflection would convince us that Adrian Ostade would include a host of Dutch painters of his class, from Isaac Ostade downwards. Even Teniers might be included in this class, for the simple reason that Teniers had a firmer, broader, and more durable touch than Adrian Ostade; in other words, that one touch of the pencil by Teniers towards describing a boor's face, would do the work of a score of small touches by Adrian Ostade. Now, though the effective single touch of the one might be worth the other's score, it would be twenty times more critical a task (in the process of cleaning) to ensure the safety of the more minute and intricate treatment. For the restorer to reckon a score of minute touches by Ostade

to one dash of Teniers' brush would save from harm the works of the one and doubly preserve those of the other. It would be better to reckon fourscore touches to Ostade than to under-estimate the number. It is the more necessary to do this, as the finer the touch the more likely it is to be disturbed, not only from its smallness, but also because the colour is laid on thinner for fine articulations than for more decisive pencilling.

No matter what the class of pictures under treatment by the restorer, their safety can only be ensured by a full apprehension of the painter's peculiar genius and distinctive manipulation. If this be admitted of the sort of pictures referred to, which appeal for the most part to the senses only, how much more emphatically true is it of those works which appeal to the understanding? If there be danger, from ignorance, in the treatment of the works we have cited, how much greater must the danger be when the works of a Raphael are at stake? Those who have only tried their hands in the restoration of a Rubens, Vandyke, Teniers, or Ostade, would be very little in the secret of the rare qualities which raise the Italian so far above the Flemish and Dutch painters as to reduce them, by comparison, to mere caricaturists.

CHAPTER VII.

VANDYKE'S PROCESS OF WORKING.

IN common with the school of Rubens, Vandyke commenced his pictures by painting in the shadows of a transparent brown colour, on a ground of a whitish brown tint. The restorer has reason to note this first transparent wash with as much solicitude as any other part of the process by which the picture was completed. Vandyke's most valued works are those which are most transparent in the shadows; and he commanded this excellent quality by working up the dark parts of the picture before he supplied the lighter. He never confounded them; each had its allotted place, subject to distinct and separate treatment. When the picture was completed, the first shadowings were to be seen in every part of the representation. Thus, for instance, in the trunk of a hollow tree, the moss, or loose pieces of bark would be loaded with full layers of body colour, according as they were more or less in the light; while the dark, hollow fissures would present nothing but the transparent wash, more or less visible as the nature of the subject required.

Why Vandyke's shadows require so much attention is owing to their being composed of a thin dark colour, on a light ground, which is easily rubbed off. The fear is, that while cleaning the face, the shadows of the hair, eyes, nose, lips, chin, and ears, may be rubbed and impoverished. This invariably happens when the inexpe-

rienced attempt to clean pictures of this class. If they try a portion of a picture by way of experiment, it is usually some light part ; successful there, they conclude all is right, proceed indiscriminately with the rest ; and so the shadows, which are the chief cause of the brilliancy of the colours, vanish in an instant. In lieu of the intelligent life-like face, nothing remains but an empty and meaningless mask, the mere ghost of the departed picture.

It is the peculiar transparency in Vandyke's shadows that prevents his best works from being successfully copied. Copies may be known by the absence of this quality. Vandyke calculated the process of the picture from first to last, and estimated the effect of every touch. The power to do this seldom or never belongs to the copyist.

The English landscape painter who delights in picturing the pebbled brook, with its fringe of hawthorn and willow, with its sunlit chequered surface teeming with flowers, very soon learns by experience that he cannot produce on canvas the effects which he sees, but by securing transparent shadows. The lily, that glows and appears so pure while resting on the bosom of the water, if plucked and laid upon an opaque surface, loses its pure and glowing tenderness. So it is with the light opaque tints of a picture ; unless they have a foil in shadows of an opposite quality, they never appear fresh and beautiful. However the uninitiated may pass them by, the artist cannot be too mindful of the shaded parts of his picture. The bright or light parts of natural objects appear to fix the whole attention of the uncultivated, who give to the quiet portions, or the shadows,

little consideration. Careless observers do not note that in fine pictures, shadows are of several kinds, transparent or not, according to the nature of the object shaded; and that they are of many degrees of darkness, and of various colours; that they are ruled by regular laws, and subject to numerous irregularities, in respect to tone and colour, and the fluctuation of lights and changing hues reflected from surrounding objects. To the uninitiated, there is a dark side of the picture and a light side of the picture, simply. From such, the light side attracts the greatest share of attention, merely because it usually displays the most attractive colours and the chief portion of the subject, not because there is most art in that part of the picture—not because the artist surmounted the greatest difficulties in the brighter half of the scene; for, although less noted by ordinary observers, the shadows in high-class pictures are the result of infinite pains. To the management of the shadows every form is indebted for its relief and every colour for its variety, force, and lustre. The shadows of a picture by Correggio might become many degrees darker, the fainter ones be altogether obliterated, and few would detect the absence and loss of them; but if a decided defect, a blot or a stain, however small, existed in any of the light parts, a child would almost discover it. If a person, indifferently conversant with art, wishes to trace the merits of a picture, he fixes his attention on the lights, and never considers the shadows. If an uninformed person attempt to clean a picture, the dark parts are probably either deemed inconsiderable, and escape unmolested, or get removed, especially if they be of that transparent, luminous, space-creating

kind just now referred to, as peculiarly excellent in the works of Vandyke.

Rich stuffs, which make up the draperies in some of this master's compositions, owe their intense beauty, variety of colour, and reflections, to washings of transparent colour, the one over the other, repeated until the depth and various degrees of richness were obtained. These washes of transparent colour sometimes extended even to the flesh. It is necessary to consider these glazings attentively, for they are not less susceptible of injury than the shadows first laid on, being produced by an exactly similar process.

The next portions of the picture to be considered are the greys, or the transition lights of the flesh. In a portrait of Charles the First, Vandyke furnished a very perfect example of the management of these lights. In this instance, beside breaking the sharp-edged angle, and blending the forehead into the half shadows of the temple, the grey lights also serve by contrast to give an additional beauty to the flesh tints.

These grey lights are given in Vandyke's works with great precision, and form a distinct and peculiar feature in the school of Rubens. In Vandyke they are most delicate, and are very evident upon close inspection, but soften to the eye when the picture is seen from a proper distance, whence they have all the appearance of real lights, such as (under happy circumstances) the cultivated eye detects in natural objects.

With the transition lights may be included those reflected ones, which are certain almost imperceptible illuminated parts relieving the objects from the back-

ground as on the dark side of the face where it melts into the space beyond.

We have asserted that Vandyke's execution, in large works, resembled his master's. The pupil, however, not unfrequently relied on the use of the 'softener.' He knew how to blend or caress his tints into harmony, without hazarding their purity. Fuseli, speaking of the management of the palette, says—'Two colours make a tint; three, mud.' Vandyke knew this, and avoided the evil. It was only in the portraits of fair women that he seems to have thought a soft texture an indispensable refinement. In thus much, then, he differs from Rubens, whom he excels in a certain melting tenderness imparted to his colours.

The works of Rubens and Vandyke are like similar flowers of different culture. Those of Rubens growing in the open air and sunlight, bold, masculine, and strong; those of Vandyke forced beneath glass by artificial heat, fragile, slender, and graceful. The same structure is in both—the difference is only one development. Nothing is more obvious than the necessity of being specially mindful of the more delicate, so that in a general calculation those pictures most susceptible of injury (as Vandyke's in the school of Rubens) may be most cared for.

Vandyke has been described as working with certainty and niceness of calculation, with a consciousness of certain results from a consistent process; yet even he, on the completion of a picture, found it necessary to revise and retouch minute particulars omitted in the regular process. The restorer should always assume the existence of these small concluding

touches. They are small but important corrections, niceties of expression suggested by after-reflections, minute particularisations necessary to definiteness or to break anything too marked—in fact, critical retouchings. In contemplating a picture by Vandyke, the spectator does not perceive (it was not intended that he should) a thousand nice discriminating points in every feature—in eye, nose, mouth, and chin; not only to make each perfect in itself, but chiefly to harmonise the whole. All this after-care was essential to satisfy the connoisseur, the physiognomist, the artist, and the anatomist—to define all differences of age and sex, and the various peculiarities of character, and the qualities of human nature.

Some would suggest that it were better to make Rembrandt, as the greatest artist of shadow painting, the master whose works should form the basis of these remarks; but it has been thought necessary to ask for that painter a separate place in the consideration of the restorer. The works of Rembrandt demand to be objects of special contemplation, and to be studied one by one apart. Each is a distinct drama, self-contained.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPECIAL CASES FROM REMBRANDT.

IT is often thought surprising that the works of the barbarous Fleming should rank in the connoisseur's estimation almost as high as the works of the learned and graceful Raphael; yet we are much deceived if any

painter has done more for the triumph of his art than this grand and solitary miller's son. His pencil recognised the meanest things, and glorified the rags and tatters of the vilest outcast. The vulgar, the hideous, and the repulsive, touched by his pencil, became eloquent and impressive. Misery, vice and crime, desolation and violence, found a ready access to the serene cabinets of the wealthy and refined. The dens of infamy, the haunts of squalor, nay, the horrors of the tomb, even the putrefying corpse, tortured and warped by disease, endowed with a new life and light by the genius of Rembrandt, came to be the delight of palaces, and to exact the homage of Europe.

A heap of stones and a solitary, limping mendicant, painted on a few square inches of wood, will be an object of competition ; collectors swarm around, covet it, and become as children in their unaffected admiration. No word escapes them touching the choice of subject, no one regrets its meanness, no one believes it mean. Such vagabonds as Rembrandt paints, the critics shun in the streets. Every sense is offended by the reality, and yet every beholder is charmed by the transcript. Wherein, then, is this magic which enables the painter so to win the homage of the fastidious? Rembrandt's beggars, culprits, and executioners, have the lineaments of the unmitigated realities they picture. Guilt, cunning, avarice, and infamy, are stereotyped in every line of the face. Were they alive, we should turn aside, nor suffer them to start up in our paths, infest our streets, and prowl about our homes. Living, they baffle the intelligent, and overawe the proud ; but in the pictures of Rembrandt they captivate and charm. What trans-

formation have these objects undergone at the painter's hands that they appeal to sight with all this fascination? The choice of subjects certainly cost the painter no effort, but his whole art was exhausted in the setting, in making it effective, in rendering it *dramatic* in the fullest sense of that term.

The art of Rembrandt, considered in respect to design, consists in giving to each character of his selection the lineaments that truly belong to it. His lines go home to the truth; they express all, and no more; they never exaggerate. If they are forcible, it is because they are accurate. If the forms they delineate are hideous, it is because the models were deformed; if they lack beauty and gracefulness, it is because the sitters whom the artist affectioned excelled in ugliness. It is the same with his colours. They are all truth, uncompromising truth. The flesh looks like flesh, and nothing else beside. You need no simile to explain what his colouring is like. Fix upon the local colours of any object, take into consideration the sort of life in which they are seen, and they are truthful to a shade. They are always vivid, never staring. He knew the precise degree in which the contrast of opposing tints was to be risked, when it produced variety and force, and when its results were confusion and vulgarity. He could give tangible existence to the fleeting hues and transient effects of light and darkness, with as much ease as ordinary Dutch painters transcribed the appearance of fixed objects. He revelled like an adept in the shadows of the night, peered wistfully into the solemn darkness, and drew order and system out of the portentous chaos. By the blaze of torch, or the wavering embers, he saw in the profound

gloom immensity of space. And whatever of interest or of wonder the eye comprehended, the hand as readily expressed.

The chief works of the Roman school may be compared to the rare books which occasionally issue from our Universities. It is the good fortune of the few to appreciate the refinement of essays, uniting at once genius and fine scholarship. The best models in ancient literature are digested by the classic author of to-day in precisely the same spirit in which Raphael might have contemplated the choice statues and medallions of antiquity. To these Raphael owed the majesty and gracefulness of his designs. Whoever would fully realise the wonderful efforts of his pencil must, to some extent, qualify himself by an appropriate course of study. The same models which adorned the studio of the painter, and the same books which suggested the subjects of his noble compositions, now exist within the reach of all. Hence it would be nothing extraordinary if the prince of painters came to be more and more appreciated and revered as the multitude shall become better informed on the principles of ancient art. But what shall we say of Rembrandt, whose works are not referable, in the same way, to widely accepted standards? We do not hesitate to assert that the time will come when his genius will be recognised as legitimate, just as the once erratic comet has become recognised amid the orderly phenomena of the celestial system. There are a class of painters whose works, while not remarkable for very great defects, are neither possessed of very striking excellences. These will pass away, while Rembrandt, with all his

faults and disregard of 'proprieties,' will live by virtue of his incomparable and inherent beauties.

Look at that small, and, at first glance, insignificant, picture entitled 'Jacob's Dream.' From the rude heap, on which the travel-worn son of Isaac sleeps, up through the opening in the amber clouds, seems to reach away, into illimitable distance, a road from earth to heaven, paved with glowing gems. The sleeper is utterly wanting in dignity, a mere pedlar in hobnailed boots; the angels are faintly sketched in, with ragged wings, mere specks, only distinguishable from the varied shapes of the clouds, which form the interminable archway through the sky. A tranquil light shuts out the gloom, and breathes warmth upon the brief space around the wanderer's pillow, making that dreary wilderness a smiling nook of rest.

Nor was Rembrandt less potent when, at his spell, the calm, sunless daylight flooded his canvas with tranquillity. Witness that master work of his at the Hague. The livid-pale corpse and passionless countenances of the physicians, once beheld in their awful solemnity, are never more forgotten. The blank stone slabs, dark with the presence of the living, seem like the tomb and shadowy pall of the departed. And those doctors! Life-blood sparkles in their veins; their eyes are deep and full of thought, and lustrous as the diamond's blaze. The clay-cold dead is as a tablet, on which may be read the sufferings of the living man. Every vein and artery, in dismal hieroglyphics, proclaims a history of sorrow and of anguish.

Turning to a more homely scene. Here, on the banks of the Skeldt, a solitary hut is reared, protected

by a few stunted, weather-beaten trees. Daylight yet lingers on the quaint and friendless home, mingling with the glowing warmth which issues from the half-open door, and glistens on the clean threshold and on the porch. A venerable dame, with wrinkled face, is there. You almost hear her footfall as she moves over the crisp, dry sand. Drearily and forebodingly she comes to steal a last furtive glance over the scene, prior to shutting out the night. As the eye tracks its way along the cheerless shore, broad, massive clouds of luminous, pitchy blackness are visible, gathering all around, and one long streak of lightning rends the gloom, which shrouds the murky sky, and quivers on the sullen waters, unbroken by dot, or speck, or sign of living thing.

Sometimes he reminds us of the sombre and tragic genius of Christopher Marlowe. The light from the horizon is withdrawn ; the robbers, equipped and abroad, are ready for their prey. The flicker of the traveller's torch, an unconscious traitor, betrays its bearer to the eye of the chief, who awaits, in gloomy patience, his victim's approach. This is the moment the painter has seized. The scowling crew, in all the mummery of antique garb, savage gesture, and implements of death, stand out in terrible relief. The tall chief, with grizzly beard, keenly parted lips, and lowering eye, overshadowed by ample brim and dusky plume, plants his gaunt figure in the front ; the rest, in straggling groups, fall into the background, and gather into dark and threatening clusters—the more remote like jagged rocks, which the imagination shapes into demons. A lurid vapour closes in the spot, half revealing a narrow gorge the eye seeks

to penetrate in vain. There seems no limit to the scene, which, like the Valley of the Shadow of Death, is full of horrors.

CHAPTER IX.

AN IDEAL PROCESS OF PAINTING.

SUPPOSE for a moment we have the privilege of observing a superior artist at his work. A vase of flowers just brought in from the garden, with all the freshness of the morning on the buds, leaves, and blossoms—roses, white and red ; hyacinths, white, purple, and pink ; soft, rich, deep-tinted African marigolds ; and tall tulips, pure white, and striped with crimson and scarlet, and petals dusted with gold. Children sporting with a goat are delicately sculptured on the vase. The painter has completed his outline. The lines are faintly indicated, so as to be just perceptible, being first drawn on a sheet of thin paper, and traced through with a needle on to a panel as smooth and white as the paper itself.

Spreading his palette with pure white and lamp black, finely ground, and selecting a few good sable pencils, the painter proceeds to relieve by shadows the vase, slab, and flowers, from the flat surface. He accomplishes this with great nicety by the admixture of black and white ; realising in form and texture every fine distinction of character which the various subjects present, and so effectively that even the practised eye could scarcely detect an oversight or inaccuracy in the transcript. If it were possible to meta-

morphose the realities of the variegated flowers, marble slab, and antique vase into forms of driven snow, then would the representation bear strict resemblance to the original objects ; soft, delicate shadows, and every graceful and various quality having been rendered in perfect unison. Satisfied with his work thus far, the artist next arranges his light from the window of the studio, so as to let a sunbeam fall upon the prominent objects of the group. The change in the light makes it necessary to pass a tender shadow across the picture, so as to leave those parts on which the sunbeam falls the lighter by comparison. This management of the shadows is a refinement which may be pursued to a very intricate degree, but in this instance the track of sunlight would produce an effect simple to imagine. We observe some flowers in splendour, and others quiet, cool, and retired. The vase of flowers is placed just within the opening of a second chamber, which has only so much cool light diffused over it as serves to make the darkness visible, and this space forms a very effective and soft background, an even contrast, neither too abrupt nor too dark. By this arrangement the whole group is relieved with great force and distinctness. The warm light searches the inmost depths of the open flowers, and peers through every little crevice, filling some with radiance, and fringing others with gold. Swarms of insects are seen sporting about, with fiery coats and wings of various hues, from the fierce and gorgeous dragon-fly to the minute ant ; and fresh, pearly drops of dew, fresh as if just fallen from the sky to disappear with the opening day, hang here and there, nestle in the bosom of the rose, glide down the satin surface of the tulip, and drop

on the cool, polished marble below, mingling with the mingled colours reflected from above. Each water drop is a little mirror, imaging in little something that is near it ; each flower, borrowing a tint from its neighbour, yields its own tint in return ; the white rose looks more tender and more intense beside the hyacinth's deep blue, and the rich rose reflects its crimson blushes all around.

The painter has succeeded in denoting the various forms composing his subject, in black and white. As at the commencement of the work he devoted his attention to the distinguishing characteristics of each particular form, so now, in the same methodical manner, he proceeds to particularise each colour and its variations. Thus the rose has three or six shades of colour in its blossoms, from the whitish divisions of the young buds to the deep clefts of the mature flowers. The same transparent lake or carmine serves for all ; for he commences with the faintest blush, and then deepens each tint in succession down to the darkest crimson. This process is repeated for every flower and object in the picture. The most subtle tint is thus obtained, whether of blue, yellow, green, or red, including the reflected hues. The treatment which serves for the rose, serves also for the hyacinth, marigold, tulip, and even the smallest leaf or stalk. Thus the utmost purity, freshness, richness, depth, brightness, transparency, and truth are ensured. The painter, having first secured the true colour of each object—that is, its colour before receiving reflections—reserves the reflected hues for after consideration. The purple which the rose attracts from the hyacinth at its side, is obtained by a faint wash of blue,

thus changing the tint, with every hue throughout. When the local colours and accidental tints are completed, the pointing is proceeded with. The borders of the flowers and edges of the leaves are tipped with sunlight, which also sparkles on the insects, and gives a central light to the smooth stalks. Those parts which are of a heavy dead texture, not reflecting light, require retouching with opaque colour to distinguish them from the transparent.

All these beautiful and various effects John Van Huysum could imitate so closely that the imitation seemed to have 'motion and life, and almost an odour.' Whoever feels a pleasure (and who does not?) in gazing at Nature's loveliest and most innocent creations—'a group of beautiful flowers—will readily allow that to look on a picture by John Van Huysum is the next best thing.' There is a feeling so happy in his conceptions of flowers, selected and disposed with the nicest susceptibility to their gentlest influences! He gives to each particular flower, bud, and plant its peculiar character, unruffled by accident. With profusion there is no repletion; grace and simplicity are everywhere.

It may be said that the process of painting a picture after the method particularised has never been pursued—that neither Van Huysum, Mignon, De Heem, nor Baptiste, in fact, pursued such a process; nay, that these painters worked to perfection by means quite different—that their works are more natural, solid, and durable than they would have been if so painted. The writer has seen a picture by Van Huysum in a half-effaced condition, painted on a white ground, in which the tulips and roses were first perfectly formed in white

and black. The more elaborate works of Van Huysum were thus worked up. Pictures painted in this manner are very susceptible of injury, owing to the extreme delicacy and thinness of the finishing transparent colours. For this reason it has been thought that a thorough acquaintance with the nature of a picture so hazardous to treat would be the best standard to fix in the mind. There would be risk of destroying every beauty in a picture by Van Huysum by use of solvents which might be safely employed in restoring a picture by Baptiste. In a flower-piece by Van Huysum, the faint and scarcely perceptible blush on the rose is almost as transient as a reflected hue. It is the sensitive eye alone that would be conscious of its presence, and only the delicatest handling that could venture on its surface. In a similar subject by Baptiste, the corresponding tints would not, as in Van Huysum, be produced by a transparent wash, but by opaque colour, which the ordinary eye could not resist, nor the ordinary handling endanger.

CHAPTER X.

IDIOSYNCRASIES OF PICTURE PROPRIETORS.

PICTURE criticisms, by so many deemed matters of capricious taste, might become instructive, if definite rules once aided the judgment; for art is no exception to the law, that interest, appreciation, and refinement, come with the understanding. Compare the remarks of three or four bystanders on any given picture. If the

observers are ignorant of the theory and practice of painting, they will exhibit great and perplexing contradictions of opinion ; but, in proportion as they happen to be informed of the means and method by which the picture was produced, and of the peculiarities of the master's school, the darkness clears up, principles begin to appear, criticism grows intelligent, and common agreements are manifested. Thus it is with all ordinary questions of science and art, and thus it will be with the art of painting, when the value of right rules and principles shall be properly regarded.

The lines of Pope are specially applicable to those who judge lightly of the character and works of an old painter :—

‘ Religion, country, genius of his age—
Without *all these* at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.’

The pedantic condemn pictures for such anachronisms as that of the painter having put fire-arms into the hands of historical personages who lived a few centuries before the invention of gunpowder—a kind of fault frequently found in the best executed pictures. Anatomists set aside those productions of the pencil which, in the markings of the muscles, would ill serve the purposes of the medical student. Picture possessors, sensitive with respect to colours, pronounce one picture too blue, another too yellow, a third too red ; others have a difficulty in seeing anything distinctly, and consequently, condemn three pictures out of four as too black, and admire the worst performances solely for their glaring intelligibility. Some, who happen to be near-sighted, prefer small cabinet pieces on account of their minute-

ness. Others favour only broad generalities, and care for nothing in particular. Some note each separate flower in the hedge-row, and stoop to take the number of blades of grass. Others take things in the mass, and see and feel but the presence of mountain, flood, and valley. There are some who see vulgarity in bright colours, and others give the preference to brown, quiet pictures. Others revel in sunshine, purple and gold, and turn from sombre objects with instinctive dislike. There is every conceivable difference in the liking and disliking of subjects. Some have all their sympathies with animals, others (at various periods) with still life, fish, flesh, fowl, or fruit, flowers, insects, and shells. Some delight in marine pictures, others in the march of armies. Some are disposed to reflect on religious pictures, and others rejoice in festive scenes. Here one consults the canvas for historic truths, and values the commonplace and the actual ; there one ponders over the mysterious allegory, which delights him the more because it is obscure. Another cause of dislike, or indifference, to some pictures, is the disposition on the part of many collectors to determine upon ideals of face and form : making no allowance for the national, religious, or moral bias of the painter, they find fault with all works which do not answer to their preconceived notions. Thus the glowing groups of Venetian masters yield infinitely more satisfaction to some than the simple and graceful beings of Raphael, or the severe and energetic forms of Angelo. In these latter times, there is a great demand for mere prettiness. This is carried so far that the lines of divine intelligence in woman's countenance (so foppery wills it) challenge disrespect rather than admiration, and the

Sibyls themselves scarcely escape contempt. Whereas there are a select few whose predilections favour the ugly and monstrous ; and with them every conceivable abortion comes, very consistently, under the head of the graphic or picturesque. Pursuing this theory, it has even been urged in print that faces on which the small-pox has left its indelible marks are more delightful than those which rival in texture the smoothest alabaster. Then there is that feeling of virtuous indignation levelled against pictures conceived to have an immoral tendency. These find no sympathy with those who renounce the flesh in the thorough-going fashion. Cumberland relates how famous pictures of this order have been prized or condemned by turns, as the fit was on, in the Spanish dominions. A pious princess once caused several pictures of this class to be cut in pieces. Heine relates that a Quaker, having taken fright at a work by Giulio Romano, spent a fortune in its purchase, in order to have the pleasure of burning it. This fanaticism exists to a dangerous extent. Yet even in this delicate department of connoisseurship, we meet with a discriminating liberality which tolerates the class of pictures referred to, and admires the artist when it cannot justify the man.

There is a class of people to whom the old masters of painting are as nought—for whom the walls of the Vatican have no sort of interest—for whom the gorgeous hues of Venice offer no allurements—those who can regard, unmoved, the women and children of Murillo—to whom the courtly women of Vandyke appear cold and meaningless. Vandyke (writes a famous American authoress) ‘awakens no emotion’ ; and of the great

Flemish artist, Rubens, the same amiable lady exclaims, 'his pictures I detest with all the energy of my soul.'

Whole galleries of fine pictures have perished of neglect, arising from an utter indifference to their beauties and ignorance of their worth. It is easier to understand such a state of things in private families, than in public bodies. Pictures bought by and for the public for daily contemplation, ought to be made an example of precaution, which private owners and collectors might follow. For it is too true that here and there the sense of responsibility is dead as regards the preservation of the works of genius, which are in their royal nature a legacy to the nation in which they exist, and to the inhabitants of successive ages.

All these differences of judgment and feeling, with respect to pictures, exist, and owners of pictures so variously disposed may be commonly met with. The fact is, people come to possess pictures through accidental circumstances; and it is an equally contingent circumstance if they happen to understand them, care for them, or know how to treat them. These eccentricities and intolerances will always militate against art until a catholic spirit, the true sentiment of art, becomes universal.

CHAPTER XI.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS.

THE connoisseur should never be compelled to follow, unconditionally, the dictum of others respecting the requirements of his pictures. If he consult a number of eminent painters, as to the condition of his pictures, they will probably indulge in vague generalities about art, with very insufficient reference to the peculiarities of the pictures in question. Painters, for the most part, are too much taken up with their own productions, to enter into a minute particularisation of the works of others. Indeed, it could be shown, by a general reference to the best pictures of the English school, that even the ablest of its masters have paid little or no attention to pictures with respect to their preservation and durability. All lovers of art regret the present condition of the chief works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to which may be added many of Romney's, nearly the whole of Hoppner's, and even some of the best portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The contempt of chemical laws in the founders of the English school is much to be wondered at ; but the continued neglect by most living artists of a study so eminently called for is without excuse. Painters of the present day seem to vie with each other in a reckless use of materials which cannot be expected to last more than a few years. Moreover, painters strictly confine themselves to favourite styles. Paletteknife, for instance, plasters on the colour in heaps. He has an extra-

ordinary liking for the picturesque—such as dark lanes, ruined edifices, and wild, barren, deserted places. He has no rival in the art of rendering ragged and jagged appearances of nature. He most delights in the disordered and unaccountable ; and the choice of subject seems to have dictated to him the choice of style, and to have made it necessary for him to employ a trowel where artists of the old schools used pencils. Paletteknife's peculiar taste, moreover, induces him to look with contempt on the works of those old painters who delighted in rendering common objects in a commonplace manner. He thinks those four pictures by Greemer representing the 'Seasons' very absurd productions. The churches, cottages, and trees, in which you may count every brick, stone, tile, and leaf, together with the crowds of people, dressed as they were in Greemer's time, and occupied according to their respective stations in life, and in such matters as the particular season or time of day would seem to call for, he gazes at as minor details, insignificant facts, unworthy the notice of an artist and a poet. Then what interest can there possibly be found in those stark-stiff saints by Albert Dürer ? On the other hand (to show that there is not always unanimity of feeling in artists), Camelhair is in downright ecstasies with painstaking, plodding Greemer, and begs of the fortunate owner the liberty to make a copy of the German masterpiece, vowing he never contemplated so rare a specimen before. Paletteknife can only attribute the choice of pictures made by his friend to sheer affectation. Camelhair, in return, bestows a look of despair on his reckless brother, who, despising the examples of the early masters of painting, has struck

out an entirely new walk of art, expressly for himself.

Surely the connoisseur, consulting two painters of such opposite tendencies, with the desire of obtaining information upon the condition of a mixed collection of pictures, would be disappointed. One produces a score of sheep with as many evolutions of the elbow, and trusts to accidental splashes of colour for the rest ; the other bestows a month in the elaboration of a wisp of hay, and thinks Gerard Dow must have laboured under excitement when he painted the handle of a besom in four days. Therefore it is that they never agree about anything in connection with art, though in most other matters they seldom differ. Then there is our famous colourist, who, on being consulted about anything connected with old paintings, immediately commences a rhapsody about those famous masters, Giorgione and Titian, interspersed with praises of the great Fleming. Colour, especially a Venetian colour, is our modern Tintoretto's forte ; he has a passion for colour ; his happiest thoughts are all in Venice, whose painters are the sources of his inspiration. All other cities, and all other painters (excepting the great Fleming) are to him of no consideration. Even when his favourite masters are at stake, he is somewhat too vague, and his observations seldom have that closeness necessary for practical purposes. Should the lover of the old masters consult the great modern landscape painter, the 'prophet of Nature,' as he has been termed, one can hardly conceive it possible that he would condescend to answer trifling questions about damaged pictures of low Dutch, German, Flemish, and Italian schools. Nor is it too

much to say that the old schools of painting are insignificant facts to which he rarely descends. The condition-of-pictures question hardly ever once entered his mind. His own pictures decay almost as soon as they are painted, and he never takes cognisance of the fact : intent upon immortality, the contingent decay, even in his own pictures, strangely enough, is a matter of indifference.

Long after this passage was written, the writer met, in a number of the 'Art Journal' for 1853, with the following statement relative to the condition of some pictures bequeathed by J. W. M. Turner to the National Gallery :—'It is tolerably well known to those who, of late years, have had access to Turner's dwelling-house, that the pictures he has bequeathed to the country are in such a state as to require the immediate attention of the "restorer" ; and if something be not soon done, they will in a very short time be comparatively worthless as works of art. We believe that Turner, during his lifetime, applied to Mr. John Seguier to undertake the task, but was alarmed at the price named by the latter.'

It may indeed be questioned whether the painter is ever the fit person to restore his own pictures. If Guido had been asked (an instance is on record) to revive one of the faded works of his own hand, he in all probability would have preferred repainting to the tedious process of cleaning and repairing. What could Reynolds have done with the countless cracks and faded tints which characterised the chief of his portraits not many years after they were painted ? Would he have possessed the patience to stipple, like a

small miniature, the various disfigurements presented? Doubtless he would have taken the liberty to repaint, and then what would have become of the resemblances? It was easy to perceive that a portrait by Etty, in the Society of Arts' Exhibition, had been in part repainted by its author. The beautiful production had become much cracked, and the impetuous artist had repainted portions, instead of following the course of each particular crack. The effect was incongruous enough, combining in one frame the early, modest, quiet style, with the florid and extravagant manner of the painter's latter years.

Turner was wise, who, on discovering some of his best works were decaying, sent for a professed restorer. He would not risk his own capricious pencil in the matter-of-fact task of reparation, though the injuries were in his own favourite pictures.

The most famous of collectors of the works of the old masters have not attended Academies for the information to guide them; and, indeed, would not find it there if they did. The spirit breathed within the walls of Academies, devoted to particular ends, if not deficient in liberality, usually wants the comprehensiveness of the accomplished connoisseur. Students in painting are mostly uneducated, and professors of painting have mostly strong prejudices. A reference to the biographies of a large number of painters will leave no question that they are, as a class, remarkable for extreme notions, contrarieties, and eccentricities. Level, solid judgment, based upon careful education, ought to constitute the liberal judge of art. Prejudice and true connoisseurship can scarcely well exist together. That distinct individualism

which lends variety and interest to the painters must ever seem like illiberality in the connoisseur, blinding him to the just claims of all those artists whose modes of thinking and working differ from a peculiar choice. It might be right, and necessary, for a painter to devote his life to particular ends ; but he is just the reverse of a comprehensive lover of the arts, who is exclusive in his admiration of particular artists, leaving unnoticed others equally meritorious. It is not to the taste, the desire, nor the interest, of rising painters, bent upon securing an immortal reputation for themselves, to trouble overmuch about the works of others. Your Lawrences are as much opposed to your Holbeins, and your Turners to your Claudes, as night to day. A gentleman may interest himself in pictures, whose bad drawing, or inharmonious colouring, might have a pernicious influence on the practitioner, who would run the risk of imbibing a hard, crude outline from one, and, it might be, 'a dirty tint' from another. What is food for the connoisseur may be poison to the painter. The collector consults illustrious artists in vain ; and he is eventually convinced (to use the words of Daniel Webb) 'that nothing is a greater hindrance to his acquiring an intimate acquaintance with the old masters than entertaining too high an opinion of the judgment of professors in painting.' He, with some exceptions, 'finds each artist an implicit admirer of some particular school, or a slave to some particular manner.' And seldom indeed does it occur to the successful painter that the works of the old masters require his friendly aid. Neglect scatters her dust like a dark veil over all, the excellent and the worthless ; but the too self-conscious genius of to-day, blinded by

the splendour of his own course, heeds not the far-off dying lamps which flicker in the past, and one by one go out.

CHAPTER XII.

PICTURE DESTROYERS.

PICTURE-FRAME makers, house painters, and decorators, are seldom deterred by any scruples from writing themselves up proficient in the art of restoring the pictures of the old masters. One possesses a famous compound, a newly invented preparation ; another, an extraordinary elixir, concocted from a very old recipe, which never fails to renew the colours of old paintings, however faded they may have become through lapse of centuries or modern ill-usage ; a third is possessed of a secret for making a varnish, which beats glass out of the market for clearness and durability—it is warranted ‘neither to discolour, bloom, nor crack,’ so that those pictures which are so fortunate as to get a few coatings of the said varnish will be astonishingly improved in all respects, and in all probability last for ever.

The well-informed, however, are seldom induced by pretensions of this order to intrust their pictures to hands guiltless of art-principles, and to operators who have no explanation to give of the special treatment each particular picture, or class of pictures, seems to require. The judicious collector rather dreads the cleverness of quacks, who would make one common

recipe suffice for all the productions of genius, so manifold and infinitely various in their nature as works of genius ever are. The professors of picture-restoration are very numerous in London, familiarly known by the sign hung out at their doors : generally an old portrait, one half clean, the other half dirty, as a specimen to convince the unwary connoisseur that the proprietor of the shop can restore pictures. The mere fact of hanging out a specimen of picture-cleaning to attract the attention of passers-by is perhaps not necessarily a proof of the shopkeeper's inability to equal his professions ; but there is a something in this fashion of advertising which makes the prudent connoisseur question the spirit and artistic faculty of the proprietor : and reflection usually leads to the conclusion that the show-picture is a sign of the shopkeeper's incapacity. Many who have had the guardianship of pictures have preferred to leave them to the ordinary decay arising from neglect, to risking their utter destruction by what seemed to them the uncertain process of cleaning. Instances, on the other hand, are not wanting of those who, with unpardonable haste, have called in the common enemy, in the person of one of these picture-owners, whose operations (saving a miracle) were conducted at the expense of the picture itself ; not intentionally nor malignantly no doubt, for where there is neither the faculty to distinguish, nor the taste to appreciate, there can be no accountability for injury, and the excuse is ignorance.

Let it not be thought, however, that all the fine pictures injured by cleaning suffer exclusively at the hands of the class of persons referred to. Gentlemen picture cleaners abound who will destroy more on a fine

morning before breakfast than one of your advertisers in a whole year. As parents are supposed best to understand the necessities of their own children, so many collectors assume to know best how to treat the requirements of their pictures. De Burtin, writing on picture cleaning, uses some plausible reasons to induce owners of pictures to dabble in solvents. Extreme love for the gem he thinks the best guarantee for its safety when under the operation of cleaning. De Burtin also thinks that reading De Burtin on 'Picture Cleaning' (that is, his own book), with a little practice, is all that is required to make a man of fortune a successful operator. If gentlemen collectors were disposed to devote their time and fortunes to that one sole object, advantage to art might possibly, in some instances, be the result. A little leisure and a little practice, with no matter how much affection, will fail to produce a competent professor of picture restoration, whatever De Burtin has said to the contrary.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RESTORER.

IN contemplating a face, or number of faces, successfully exhibiting delicate sentiments and deep passions, we are struck with the story they tell, or the moral they combine to represent, and we marvel at the skill of the artist who could, so to speak, create anew the life, by the aid of simple lines and colours. We should marvel more did our reflections lead us to consider each par-

ticular part of the process by which the life-like forms came fashioned from the painter's hand. It were instructive to contemplate the process, from the laying of the first broad general grounds of colour, to the critical and final retouchings, by which the niceties of expression were arrived at, and which were the finish of the work and the evidence of mastery. It is these finishing touches, the 'glazings,' 'scumblings,' 'blendings,' and 'pointings,' whether considered as mere texture, or as intellectual refinements, which tax the restorer's art and claim his vigilance. The sculptor wastes away the rude block till he has accomplished the desired form. Not so the painter. He builds up his forms from a blank surface, and hides, as he progresses, all the preliminary layers upon which the external colours depend for durability and lustre. And hence, not only the meaning and spirit of the work must be understood; the restorer must also be familiar with the nature of the materials and the manner of their employment.

The restorer should also be deeply read in those established principles which test the truth and goodness of pictorial representations. He should understand linear perspective, that he may know where its laws have been adhered to, and where ignored. He should be acquainted with aërial perspective, that he may in certain works appreciate its many and various beauties. He should be master of anatomy, that he may be careful not to injure the works of those artists which exhibit an accurate acquaintance of the human figure. He should understand the principles of colouring, so far as they have been ascertained, that he may be free from the danger of injuring beauties founded on principles,

and, at the same time, be in a position to understand, and respect, if not to admire, works painted without any definite knowledge of colours. The practical restorer should study to the end, that his mind may become, as it were, an index of the various styles of painting practised by the masters whose works are his care. Be the style of a painter simple or complex, graceful or ungraceful, it should be registered in its place. The restorer, like the physician, should have no bias. It is for him to trace with untiring industry, and unerring precision, the many fine distinctions in each particular work he may have to treat. He ought to comprehend, not only the meaning and spirit of each work, but be able to trace, bit by bit, with microscopic exactness, the means and the method which the artist employed to accomplish it. It is not enough for the restorer to know the results, he must also penetrate their causes—that the effects may not suffer. It would seem that nothing less than a master mind could achieve the successful treatment of a master work, but it comes out in the end, that a restorer of inferior power, profiting by the creations of the artist, may be able to appreciate their excellences though unable to produce them: just as the critic discovers in another the qualities he could never have invented himself. In a word, the restorer has wholly to devote himself to the study of pictures, until he has made himself as familiar with the productions of many pencils as the ambitious painter does with a few select examples.

It is quite possible to conceive an accomplished restorer, fulfilling the high functions of *conserver* to the arts, content in that capacity, and devoting all his ener-

gies, with frank good will and hearty self-respect, to the preservation of the works of others—willing to forego any reputation he might himself achieve as a painter for the general good of art—content to be the servant and the friend of painters, not their rival. He should be favourable to the growth and exchange of congenial sympathies, and he might well become an adviser to them in some minor practical difficulties often experienced by creative genius. The painter not unfrequently works in ignorance of the mechanical department of his art. Through the neglect of what he is too apt to think unworthy of his attention, the rationale of his materials and their uses, he often labours in vain, and grasps at last but that transient reputation which only lives, like the actor's and the musician's, in the breath of memory, and by the tongue of report.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEVOTION OF THE RESTORER.

LET it not be thought that the man who earnestly devotes his life to the service of art in the capacity of restorer is necessarily destitute of the mature aspirations of the painter. It is possible to be as mindful, and to display as much care for the preservation of an author's productions, as the author himself could desire. True, a sincere love and appreciation are essential; and who doubts the existence of profound interest and affection for the works of great poets and painters? Critics may

be found devoting their best energies in the purification of a poet's text ; and why may not others display equal zeal over the lines and colours of the artist ? We can realise the annotator, by long study, acquiring something of the dramatist's way of thinking, and the power to re-state passages accidentally become obscure, and to re-render vague conjunctions of words into delicate expressions of sentiment and animated descriptions. So with injured or obscured works of the old painters—similar intelligence and devotion will enable the restorer to perform like services to the picture art.

Often do we see men unceasing in their application after less important concerns. An entomologist will beat the dark copse through the long night, in order that he may add one more variegated moth to his case ; he will traverse the swamp, that an insignificant gnat may be represented in his collection, and watch a whole season to capture a rare butterfly. So with the botanist and his plants, the conchologist with his shells, and the antiquary with his relics. No trouble is too great for these faithful students. The restorer, too, who is duly impressed with the importance of his object, with the same disregard of exertion, collects everything relating to his craft in the form of drawing, print, or etching, bearing the stamp of the master's hand. He seeks after the obsolete, pores over old books, gleaning here and there particular facts. In ancient mansion, gallery, or cathedral, wherever the old painters have left the impress of genius on the walls—in dim ancestral portraits or nobler visions of creative thought—there the restorer makes his study and his home. His well-taught eye detects the slow decay which lurks beneath the surface

of resplendent colours. An atom of dust betrays to him the presence of the insidious worm ; he watches the subtle film, left by the moist air, and baked by the sun or fire, as day by day its presence obscures each tender tint and softened hue. Whatever tends to injure the objects of his care arrests his attention, and ordinary decay, the consequence of neglect, or the effects of malice, he labours to repair. Bending before the sacred ruin, he regards it with no less awe than if he were conscious that the author of the work still lingered near. Harbours no mercenary thoughts, he rises to his task with just and conscious pride, feeling that the last will and testament of a great artist is in his hands, himself the chosen minister to carry out the last behest.

Thus cheerfully, with light and gentle touch, he day by day reveals some portion of the buried treasure—some gleaming fragment of poetic thought. As old monastic sculptors, by faith and genius inspired, laboured until the quarry of shapeless stones became impressed with the light fantastic form and character of the woodland bower, so in patience and endurance the work of the restorer proceeds, until at last, the dark, unmeaning space presents a paradise of splendour peopled with groups of life-like, breathing forms. Immured in the solitude of the vaulted church, he engages in the long and gracious task of restoring these relics of bygone ages, in the generous love of art itself, and with the hope of perpetuating the great creations of the past. He pictures to himself the authors of those faded images toiling for long years with the zeal of martyrs, philosophic patience, and godlike power of hand, to win for themselves immortal crowns. But as no miracle happened

to aid them in their work, either in the drawing of lines or mixing of tints, so no miracle saved these from the ordinary casualties of—decay. The fissure in the wall, the gap in the high roof, damp mists from open doors and casements, and the smoke of censer, taper, and lamp, are active agents of destruction—to say nothing of the bigot's fury and the soldier's rage. And looking back through the long, dreary, troubled night of disrespect and cold indifference, shrouding like a dim pall the works of the great painters, far from wondering that their glory has somewhat diminished, we might oftentimes well regard it as miraculous indeed that a vestige remains to tell where beauty and gracefulness once mutely reigned and won their silent victory over the proud heart.



SELECTIONS FROM OCCASIONAL WRITINGS

REMBRANDT.

PICTURE dealers, in spite of prejudice against them as a body, would appear to be indispensable agents in the upward progress of the art-student. The miscellaneous hardware dealer, who buys small daubs at two shillings apiece to hang among his rusty files and hinges—the affluent pawnbroker, who flatters himself that he can distinguish a work of promise and genius from a got-up ‘furniture picture’—and the higher order of dealer, who will venture to buy what he is pleased to designate ‘little bits of colour,’—are perhaps each and all essential, as things go, in a monster city like London. In ten cases out of twelve, young painters, on their outset in life, are necessitated to do business with these men ; and it would save them a vast amount of mortification if they learned to look at that fact in an ordinary business light, instead of regarding each descent into this picture market as a degradation. The ambitious student arrives in the metropolis hot with enthusiasm, never doubting that the doors of the wealthy and titled will be opened to receive him ; the only question is, whether he will condescend to enter. Alas ! he has to wait, and work, and starve, it may be, for twenty years, and then comes to think himself fortunate indeed if he finds himself a really welcome guest at the snug fireside of some

kind-hearted merchant. He must live through long years before he will have occasion to visit the banker with that magical slip of paper denominated a cheque—receiving meanwhile his wages in shillings dropped reluctantly one by one from the dealer's hand, as if they were drops of blood from the heart, before he can command a just and substantial recognition of his abilities in whole shovelfuls of gold at the bankers'.

The ordinary picture dealer is an ogre to the student. It is seldom we hear of a young painter coming from a picture dealer in high glee at the amount of encouragement he has received. There is, however, one instance of the kind upon record, and that referring to the subject of our sketch. Rembrandt Van Ryn, by a judicious friend's advice, carried his first performance to the city of the Hague, and, much to his astonishment, found a dealer who bought it for a hundred florins. What the subject of this early production was we know not ; but, judging from the fact that our young limner practised his hand, morning, noon, and night, upon the peasants about his father's mill, we should conclude that it was of a rural character, and probably well painted. Now we undertake to say, that if young English painters went direct to Nature, and painted from the life with the same earnestness as this Dutch miller's son is known to have done, and possessed modesty and talent in the same proportions, they too, like him, might sometimes be astonished at the large prices which their efforts would realise. Sickly, morbid productions of London attics are what the dealer refuses to speculate upon, and finds no great difficulty in steeling his heart against. If he has no real fondness

for art, he is at least usually far too shrewd to turn away a young Rembrandt from his door.

It will be said that Rembrandt was no ordinary genius—that he was the wonder of an age; but still humbler capacities may learn a lesson from him—for the most extraordinary thing in Rembrandt was his ordinary good sense. Having sold his picture for a much higher price than he had anticipated, and to a dealer familiar with the picture market and the public taste, he came to the conclusion that he might venture to go into business on his own account, which he speedily did, making choice of Amsterdam for his home, at the same time selecting a careful country girl for his wife. Here, then, we find our great and original painter settled down, at the age of twenty-four, in one of the narrow, busy, thriving thoroughfares of a Dutch city. It was now his object to make the acquaintance of his neighbours—the wealthy merchants who passed the greater part of their time on the shaded quays inspecting the merchandise brought to their doors from all parts of the world.

The idea of advertising, to a modern young painter, would appear the height of vulgarity. He learns 'to labour and to wait,' in a useless sense. He does not consult the public; he expects the public to consult him. This is false pride, for if the young man has any genius, the sensible connoisseur would be only too proud of his friendship. Rembrandt sought and employed every means of gaining publicity. In fact, like tradesmen of the present day, he reduced advertising to a system. Among the ingenious modes he adopted one instance is worthy of relating. Dutch servants, for

the reason that they spend a considerable portion of each morning in scrubbing the door-steps, and in washing down the fronts of their master's mansions, come to be well known. Rembrandt had one of these inestimable treasures, who, among other failings, was accustomed to dissipate a few hours daily at the casement. The painter, it may be, felt the inconvenience of this indolent habit on the part of his domestic, and it suggested itself to him that possibly a picture might be a more economical mode of decorating the front of his house, and serve at the same time to make known his skill as a painter. Henceforth the portrait of his interesting maid-servant appeared at the window in lieu of the original. So great was the painter's skill that it was some time before the cheat was discovered ; and the expedient answered. To surprise and excite a Dutch audience required a masterstroke. Zeuxis had a much easier task in deceiving the birds of the air with his painted fruit. The thing took, and the painter, by this means and others, became known to the citizens of Amsterdam, and to the polite inhabitants of every other city in Holland. Certain writers, whose delight is in disenchanting mankind, would suggest that this story of the servant-girl at the window is nothing more than a pretty device of the biographers ; but besides being truly Rembrandtish, it happens also to be very well authenticated.

Whatever means were adopted to arouse the attention of the 'old Amsterdammers,' certain it is that they took up with young Rembrandt heartily, and not only bought his pictures, but even looked up the brightest of their sons to enliven the painter's studio in the character of pupils. He obtained good prices for

his pictures, and large premiums with the lads. This looked like business. Rembrandt's boyhood had cost the ancient miller, his father, something considerable. He was not taught by those three masters, Swanenburgh, Lastman, and Pinas, for a few florins. The time arrived when there was no urgent necessity for advertising from the window, and, among others, the sign-picture was sold to an eminent collector for a good round sum. It was not only a great feat to excite the attention of a Dutch audience, but it required almost supernatural powers to keep up their interest from day to day and from year to year. We have seen a Dutch crowd settle down in a theatre and sit out tragedy and comedy without being tickled in the smallest degree—paying the entrance fee, as it would appear, for the privilege of resting their limbs after the exertions of the day; and, certainly, Rembrandt must have displayed uncommon tact in keeping up an excitement among a public commonly so stolid and impassible.

Able politicians and members of the learned professions found it worth their while to maintain an intimacy with the miller's son. Burgomasters sought his company, and ladies of rank and fashion and beauty gossiped in the atelier of the so-called ill-bred painter, and even the niggard money-lenders of the day, Jew and Gentile alike, came to purchase the life and immortality which the genius of Rembrandt could impart on the receipt of a specified number of florins. He made the friendship of the leading connoisseurs, and, moreover, became a princely collector himself. No painter took greater delight in his profession. His ample means enabled him to buy up rare and costly antiquities, and

his studio came to present the aspect of a museum of curiosities, each of which in its turn did duty in manifold designs. He studied the finest works of Italian masters, in order to make himself a more excellent Dutch painter, and he succeeded. It may have been that the very stolidity of his employers helped to develop the more potent characteristics of our artist's compositions.

Seldom do we find Rembrandt dwelling in the calm sunless daylight. He revelled like an adept in the shadows of the night, peered wistfully into the solemn darkness, and drew order and system out of the portentous chaos. By the blaze of a torch, or wavering embers, he saw in the profound gloom immensity of space, and he learned to give tangible existence to the fleeting hues and transient effects of light and darkness with as much ease as ordinary Dutch painters transcribed the appearances of fixed objects.

Nor was there less of daring than of originality in the invention and introduction of this new style. Rembrandt's early pictures are instances of minute and careful manipulation. He did what few painters have the wisdom to do. He reserved the privilege of adopting a new style until he had enslaved his patrons to his will. For a time only his own particular friends came from his pencil invested with glories before unheard of in the world of art. In these exceptional cases he sported with gorgeous sunbeams and lonesome shadows, and carried the mind of the beholder spellbound, as far removed from everyday life as heaven is from earth. Meanwhile the wizard himself kept far removed from the sphere of these influences. He could traffic with

the most experienced collectors in Holland. He knew every device of the market, and could drive a bargain with a keenness and relish which would have stamped him for a great merchant if he had not been a great painter. His industry was surprising. In addition to numberless works in oil, he etched, at intervals, nearly four hundred plates, and supplied the folios of half the connoisseurs of Europe. His execution, whether on copper or on canvas, was as rapid as it was bewildering in its effects. He found no competitor either in painting or in engraving. The money which poured into the lap of the penniless woman whose good fortune it was to become his wife would have supported a dukedom.

The progress of such a man was of course sometimes clogged by envy and detraction, but certainly his life was not embittered by the malice of rivals, for rivals he had none. Of his meanness and cupidity much has been written, but we do not believe the half of it. That his wife was thrifty is certain, and moderate thrift is no crime. As we said, Rembrandt resorted to tricks of trade, but they were of such a kind as most traffickers in the fine arts continue to practise. For the exorbitant sums he is said to have exacted from the admirers of his productions, he might be defended on the plea that posterity has confirmed, and in some instances doubled, the estimate he entertained of his own worth. Of the charge respecting his fondness for low company, it may be answered, that in this he was only consistent, having himself derived his existence from a source not remarkable for extreme refinement, and having, in obedience to the dictates of his heart, married a homely country girl. Yet, notwithstanding that he found high

life irksome in the extreme, we do find him often surrounded by some of the most fastidious men and women of his day. The assertions of his miserly instincts were baseless, for no sooner had the woman who had shared with him his successful career left him in the world alone, than the accumulation of long years of unremitting toil—the heaps of gold stowed away in antique chest and cabinet, passed into other hands—we know not how. At his wife's death, as we learn from recent discoveries, his savings were estimated at 40,750 florins. Some twenty years later he sank into the grave a bankrupt. He could hardly be a miser, for he supplied his professional wants with a reckless profusion, and left the world almost a beggar. He might have died a millionaire ; and, as it turned out, he almost neglected to save fifteen florins to meet the expenses of his funeral.

Our object has been to do simple justice to one who laboured long and well for the glory of his art, and that, for the greater period of his life, with a good sense not often vouchsafed to genius.

PAUL BRILL.

SOME eminent critics have recently assailed the reputations of certain venerated old landscape painters with much severity. Claude Lorraine, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator Rosa, have each in turn been brought to the bar of public criticism and condemned. It is alleged that the world-wide fame of these painters has been kept up by the force of habit—that successive generations, out of indolence, have taken it for granted that they were great painters. It is now discovered that Salvator Rosa dashed in his rocks without the fear of the geologist before his eyes; that the ‘gentle Claude’ painted without much knowing what he was about. He saw certain very delightful effects in nature, and copied them pretty closely, but he often betrayed great ignorance of artistic qualities, which happened to be undiscovered at the period in which he lived. Gaspar Poussin’s trees are found to be conventional. The leaves do not depend from the twigs properly. He is, moreover, too black in his shadows, and on the whole exceedingly culpable. Yet, notwithstanding these recent objections urged against the three great favourites of the last two centuries, people continue perversely to take pleasure in

‘Whate’er Lorraine light-touched with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew.’

For our part, we always feel happy in the presence of a Claude. The wild glen and robber-haunted pass of

Salvator fill us with less agreeable emotions. With respect to Gaspar, he does not strike us with terror nor soothe us into that state of happy forgetfulness we experience in looking at Lorraine; the effect of Gaspar's expansive scenes, with their clear blue skies and fleecy clouds, tend rather to arouse the reflective mind to a keen and healthful enjoyment of life. Doubtless the moderns have improved in some important respects upon these elder landscape painters. The wide world has been opened to our artists; and wherever the foot of the traveller has penetrated, there the painter has followed with his pencil. Mighty rivers and trackless continents have been explored, and rolled up, as it were, in interminable panoramas. The mountain, crowned with everlasting snows, has been measured and modelled. Mont Blanc, in its sublimity, is now shown and explained for a shilling; and laudable attempts have even been made to reduce the great globe itself to a convenient scale. These exhibitions of mechanical genius, no less than the annual Exhibitions of modern pictures, make one thing apparent—to wit, that facilities of travelling and extended civilisation have opened up a wider field and increased the materials for the exercise of the pencil a thousandfold.

Paul Brill, the subject of this article (who flourished between 1556 and 1626), might be considered the Turner of his day. Of humble origin, we find him in Antwerp getting a precarious livelihood by painting small pictures on musical instruments. It was the wish of his parents that he should remain with them in the city of Antwerp; but, as we see every day in life the lovely and affectionate leaving father, mother, home,

and friends, to follow the fortunes of husbands of whom they know comparatively little, so Paul Brill, urged onward by some impulse hardly less potent than love itself, must needs leave his native city. Antwerp is not large enough to contain him. He wants more breathing room. More, there is a secret in the case. He has a brother, Matthew, beyond the Alps, who, as an artist, is making a name. If he could but get to Rome, what might he not accomplish! A mere mechanic in his native place, without honour and without means, he might get both but for those huge mountains which separate him from 'Matthew.' He cannot rest. His friends want him to remain. They would rather he subsisted in an obscurity (they do not feel) than that he should risk his precious life in a perilous journey to Italy.

But in spite of parental misgiving and remonstrance, the brothers Brill at length met. Paul secretly left Antwerp in about his twentieth year. It is said that he found some employment in Lyons before crossing the Alps. Of this we know little; but it is certain that he eventually arrived at the Eternal City, and took rank as an assistant under Matthew Brill, in carrying out some important commissions in the Vatican. Poor Paul had travelled all the way on foot. We can fancy the delight he experienced on finding his relative in the receipt of wealth and honours. His struggles over, weary and footsore, he found at once a home, friends, and employment. Nor was the young wanderer unwelcome to that elder brother, toiling lonely and wearily in the Vatican. The youthful artist brought with him heart and hope, and a folio of sketches fresh from the

forests and mountains over which he had passed. He had often lingered by the way to jot down the strange forms of rugged rock and frowning castle as they burst upon his sight. Often had he been necessitated to part with his sketches for the bread which sustained him in his wanderings ; but in the storehouse of his mind he had treasured up impressions of the picturesque scenery through which he had passed—impressions vivid and faithful as only young and ardent natures are able to receive and cherish.

The dream of his youth is fulfilled ! Paul and Matthew work side by side. He has pensions, distinctions, and ample scope for display. Popes and cardinals are his patrons and admirers. He can afford to linger over the miniature landscape until he has defined and elaborated each leaf and blade of grass, as it were, and presented on a few square inches of panel a whole realm of mountain, flood, and valley. In the larger works with which he decorated the halls and staircases of his princely patrons he manifested the utmost daring. Placing the dense forest of gnarled oaks and black towering pines at his foot, his eye wandered forth over plain, lake, and valley, and ascending the Alps, passed upward to the eternal snows. His mountain sides are clothed in the richest verdure, here and there dark in the sombre shadow of the frowning promontory, or resplendent with the light of the morning. Sometimes he grows romantic, and carries us to dark caverns and hoary ruins, where the tired pilgrim reposes, lulled in his slumbers by the notes of the shepherd's pipe, whose goats browse among the grass, plants, and flowering shrubs which thrive amid the rocks and stones that lie scattered

about in wild disorder on the brink of the roaring cataract. But whether we have cavern, ruin, or giant oak entangled by a mass of creeping parasites, there is that never-to-be-forgotten burst of Alpine scenery for the distance. Those Alps which inspired the wandering boy continued in their grandeur the favourite theme of the old man's pencil.

As Le Clerc, the eminent engraver and designer, could group an army of twenty thousand men in admirable order on a few inches of copper, so Paul Brill, with equal tact in composition, would transcribe on to a small piece of canvas thirty miles of picturesque country, without confusion in any part. He understood and appreciated those subtle and varied colours which extremely remote objects present, as they are more or less influenced by what Gilpin calls the 'ether-tinge.' He blended his air-tints with so much care and delicacy that a few specks of light will often indicate the far-off island, with its haven, shipping, and forts. His distances are commonly of a bluish cast (to which critics have never been wholly reconciled), approximating to green, more or less tender as they approach the eye of the observer. Sometimes he loved to linger among vine-clad hills, and then the purple hue takes the place of the cool, green glades of less cultivated scenes. There is to our mind something very beautiful in the career of Paul Brill, for ever dwelling as it were apart from the world, yearning after the beauties and sublimities of Nature,—for ever watching with loving eye the changeful hues of those vast silent realms of forest and mountain.

He might be termed the founder of the school of landscape painters in Italy. He was not directly the in-

structor of Claude Lorraine ; but it is not difficult to trace his influence in the formation of that master's hand. Matthew Brill introduced to the *élite* of Roman society the elegant taste of embellishing the walls of their palaces with landscapes ; but Paul perfected what his brother, in a poor crude way, merely initiated. Paul not only won the favour of the nobles and dignitaries of the Church, the leading artists of the day also gathered around him, no less fascinated by the magic of his pencil. Annibale Carracci himself laboured to embellish the classic scenes of the Fleming with appropriate groups from Grecian mythology or Scripture history, so that among the many charms which distinguish the works of Paul Brill, we must not overlook the well-proportioned figures which sometimes enliven their foregrounds. These are often confined to lonely travellers journeying on mules up rocky ways, or to shepherds tending sheep and goats on sunny hill-sides, and are chiefly by Brill's own hand ; but, in more important instances, the figures dispute for supremacy with the landscape itself. Thus, in one picture, Diana and her train rivet the attention.

HANS HOLBEIN IN ENGLAND.

WHEN Sir Thomas More was Chancellor to King Henry the Eighth, the famous painter Hans Holbein arrived at his door with an introduction from no less a personage than Erasmus. The introduction consisted

of a terse Latin epistle, and a portrait of the writer painted by the bearer, forming an ingenious mode of recommendation which Sir Thomas could hardly resist. Two reasons are assigned for Hans leaving his native city, to wit, an empty purse and a termagant wife, each sufficient in its way, but we are inclined to believe that the former was the real motive, for the painter was wellnigh necessitated to beg his way to England. We all know how common it is for a genius to lie neglected in the place of his nativity. It was with young Holbein as it is with the young Smiths and Joneses who happen to evince tokens of genius in our own cities ; as we have been reminded an indefinite number of times, the prophet is without honour in his own country.

It was a good thing for Holbein that he got admittance to, and won the good graces of, Sir Thomas More. The family of the Chancellor at once sat to the painter ; and when as many pictures were completed as the minister needed for his own palace he managed to let the king his master into the secret. Either by accident or design, his majesty came in, and cast his eyes along the gallery, living as it were by the forms and visages of persons familiar to him. We can fancy his burst of astonishment. The minister, with all due subjection, laid the entire collection at the king's feet, for him to pick and choose ; but the wily monarch, at once surmising that the bird which had laid the golden eggs was not far off, immediately inquired for the artist, and without ceremony installed him court painter, with a pension, exclaiming, with characteristic sagacity, that since he had got the painter, Sir Thomas might keep

the pictures ! Here was good fortune bursting upon Holbein like a gleam of sunlight.

We find no reason to suppose that Hans had any difficulty in adapting himself or his pencil to the taste of his new employer. He was one of those bluff, jovial fellows this king could appreciate, and who could make himself very accommodating. Trivial anecdotes of his early career are remembered, which, as Walpole remarks, are not so important in themselves as to bear repeating, but which are very descriptive of the esteem in which the man came to be held of whom such anecdotes could be thought worth preserving. Illustrating a work by Erasmus, Hans rudely enough wrote under the figure of an old student the name of Erasmus the author ; and the author, with very little of the spirit of repartee, wrote under a fellow drinking the name of Holbein the painter. Certainly the author's repartee had most force, for the young limner was not altogether free of the vice indicated by the rebuke. Indeed, the whole career of Holbein, up to the period of his arrival in England, must have prepared him for the presence of a monarch whose sentiments were never known to err on the side of delicacy and refinement.

Holbein's business was chiefly to paint the portraits of people about the court, and he certainly succeeded, for every person of note, from the king to his jester, came from the court studio bearing the stamp of truth and genius.

Of the portraits in the Exhibition at Old Trafford, some wear an air of mournful interest in the eyes of those who, for the first time, gaze on the features of the victims of the huge nuptial tyrant. What the painter's

feelings were as he parted with queen after queen, and with the great men who had honoured his pencil, we know not ; we only know that he continued to employ his skill in delineating each new favourite selected to fill up the blank which the executioner had made. Callous, perhaps, like his master, he continued to paint on, immortalising those whom beauty and learning could not save from the block. He recorded facts. We only know the people of that eventful period through Holbein's pencil ; and, doubtless, we know them well.

In the Gallery of Ancient Masters will be found a few of the finest and most elaborate examples of Holbein's art. The portrait of Henry the Eighth is a triumph of portrait painting under difficulties. The over-gorged king, big too with conceit, leers on the passer-by just as he might have done in life. In the same department we have a worthy companion in the equally elaborate portrait of Francis the First. In both these pictures the painter aspires to an equality with the works of Leonardo da Vinci himself. There are points of excellence, of sublimity, in the works of Leonardo which perhaps no other painter ever reached ; nor had the German any of those lofty aspirations which influenced the Italian ; but in painstaking care, and in skilful elaboration of details, he had few rivals. Of this the two pictures cited are instances in proof. Nor was he frequently defective in drawing. The features are articulated with a precision, and the muscles and bones indicated with a nicety, which always denotes the consummate master. These remarks will be further established by an appeal to several other examples

placed in the British Portrait Gallery. 'Queen Catherine Parr,' in whole-length, and the whole-length of the 'Earl of Surrey,' are examples of his larger works. Some discussion has taken place respecting the genuineness of the Surrey picture; but the visitor may rest assured that it is genuine. The doubt arose from the fact of the colouring having been a little impoverished and altered in tone by cleaning,—no uncommon thing with old paintings, as formerly most people thought themselves competent to the critical task of cleaning pictures.

The portrait of 'Queen Jane Seymour' is another interesting work by Holbein. 'The Father of Sir Thomas More' possesses great force of expression, and may be taken as a masterpiece. To these may be added, 'William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury' and 'Sir Thomas Gresham,' founder of the Royal Exchange. Others may also be pointed out as not to be overlooked. The celebrated specimen of 'Viscount Falkland' is specially deserving of study; as are also the 'Duke of Monmouth,' the 'Earl of Clarendon,' 'Lady Jane Grey,' 'Sir Henry Guildford,' and several others. As it is more than improbable that such another assemblage of Holbein's works will again be got together, it may not be out of place here to suggest to the visitor the advantage of paying a marked attention to these interesting relics of the past.

Perhaps no artist entertained fewer thoughts of the future than Holbein, and no man furnished more themes for discussion to the antiquary, or better illustrations to the student in history. His industry and versatility were alike remarkable. He monopolised all the sitters

of his time whose faces were worth rendering on canvas ; and when we regard the labour bestowed upon those pictures, whose authenticity admits of no manner of doubt, we are amazed that any one pencil could have produced such a multitude of works, all so ably and so conscientiously finished. No wonder that a monarch so shrewd as Henry the Eighth should have awarded his protection to a worker and artist whose untiring zeal and ability in his profession commanded the respect of every beholder, and distanced every competitor ; and we can readily understand the reception which the enraged nobleman received who demanded the life of the painter as the price of an insult. ‘ Out of seven peasants,’ said the king, ‘ I can make seven lords, but not one Holbein ! ’

It is to be regretted that the Exhibition does not possess one work of the master’s illustrative of his skill in composition. Notwithstanding that his merit in this respect was very small, still such a picture as that belonging to the Surgeon-Barbers’ Company would have formed a centre of attraction ; and one would have thought that a few months of exhilarating sunshine would have tended to improve the tints of a picture which for centuries has hung mouldering in the murky atmosphere of the City of London. Still we must permit of some degree of anxiety for a gem which time has rendered so precious. As a mark of the esteem in which this picture has been held, we may relate the report that the late Sir Robert Peel (an accomplished connoisseur) paid an annual visit to the hall of the Barbers’ Company for no other purpose than to inspect this one treasure.

Of all the old masters Holbein at least has found adequate publicity. His works have been multiplied by the graver, and sown broadcast over Europe. So early as the reign of Charles the First, the careful Hollar etched a vast number of his subjects, consisting of historical pieces, 'The Dance of Death,' plans for buildings, and elegant designs for the handles of swords and daggers. Everybody seems to have consulted the ingenious Hans. We find carvers and gilders appealing to him ; his fancy is called into play to furnish patterns for jewellers and goldsmiths ; and even the bookbinders and clockmakers could not get on without his assistance.

Of the books which have received embellishments from the same source we may mention the large number inserted by Lodge in his series of Portraits ; and also those which adorn 'Birch's Lives' ; while Tindal and Rapin were no less indebted to Holbein for illustrations. In the reign of George the Second, Virtue brought out prints of the chief subjects of our painter, including that of 'Edward the Sixth granting the Charter to the Bridewell Hospital,' and one representing the family of Henry the Eighth. Chamberlaine, in the time of George the Fourth, published two distinct series of portraits of the artist's chief sitters. Indeed, the prints engraved after Holbein may be numbered by thousands. Of 'The Dance of Death' there exist more than twenty editions ; of the 'Picture Alphabet' there have been not less than twenty-four separate issues ; while the illustrations to Erasmus's 'Panegyric on Folly' have multiplied in a corresponding degree. Time has had the effect of increasing rather than of diminishing the

interest attached to the productions of the man who came poverty-stricken to our shores ; and we may say that the life and fame of Hans Holbein present to the young and aspiring student an encouraging instance of success consequent upon hearty and well-directed exertions.

Of the style of Holbein we have little to say, nor have we any comparison to offer from among the pictures of the present time. His clear, pure, even tones of colour are quite opposed to the careless, muddled complexity of tints we too frequently observe in the works of modern masters. Although not overladen with paint, Holbein's pictures are never poor and washy, but possess a firm texture and wholesome hue. Ornamental robes, studded with jewels and decorated with embroidery of silver and gold, are rendered crisp, sparkling, and like the realities. The backgrounds are commonly of a bluish cast, sometimes green, and always with the hard, firm look of enamel. The fastidious worker is everywhere apparent. In the selection and preparation of the panels even, and in the grinding of the pigments, we trace the careful supervision of an experienced eye. Of the allurements which may be woven out of deep sombre shadows and sudden flashes of light he lived in utter ignorance ; yet he was often forcible, without exaggeration ; and if he failed to flatter the vain, or to approach the supreme loveliness of some of his fair models, he at least rendered them comely to our eyes (apart from the quaint habiliments by which they are so often disfigured) by a delicate and fastidious manipulation.

DIÉTRICH.

HAD there never been imitators of the old painters, picture collecting would still be fraught with difficulties enough. The number and variety of true pictures alone offer a wide field for the exercise of the connoisseur's discrimination. Long and patient study is necessary to master those peculiarities of style by which the several masters are distinguished the one from the other. To the eye of the novice certain masters and scholars bear a mutual resemblance so strong that the distinction between them is seemingly almost without a difference. Of course the eye of the experienced collector soon discovers the country and period to which a work belongs, and is not necessitated to ask whether it be Spanish, Flemish, or Italian. He will, moreover, readily point out the school from which a picture proceeded. He soon decides upon such broad differences by the general features of the picture; but when it becomes a question as to the actual handwriting—that is, as to who painted the picture—then the quality of the work alone can be appealed to with safety.

There never has been more than one Titian, one Raphael, and one Rembrandt. The best pupils of these great men fell far short of the high standard which their masters set up; and it follows, therefore, that with an intelligent appreciation of the works of the supreme head of a school, the lesser constellations may, by comparison, be easily detected in their borrowed lustre. What are called school copies may, for

the most part, be readily distinguished by their want of force. Sometimes, it is true, the master was assisted in his labours by illustrious scholars ; but in such cases the master claimed the entire credit of the joint production, and properly so, because the assistance thus obtained was commonly confined to mere mechanical portions, the design and final finish being the master's share and responsibility. There are rare instances of imitations which deceive the best judges ; nay, painters themselves have been deceived by copies, and have mistaken the works of others for their own, as in a case of a painting of the ' Holy Family,' by Andrea del Sarto, which Giulio Romano insisted was painted by himself and Raphael.

Where men of genius have made it their deliberate aim to deceive, they have sometimes succeeded. David Teniers would counterfeit a whole gallery of painters and produce almost fac-similes of the styles of the various schools from the same palette, so that none but the very learned in such matters would think of disputing their authenticity. But perhaps the greatest of all deceivers in this way was Christian William Ernest Diétrich, who was born at Weimar in 1712, and died at Dresden in 1774. The whole career of this painter was devoted to deception. We are doing an injustice to Ostade by calling our illustration after Diétrich, but there is no help for it. It would hardly be possible to select an example from the pencil of this German which might not be justly claimed by some other German, Dutchman, Italian, or Frenchman, among his illustrious predecessors.

Gainsborough, painting the portraits of Garrick and Foote, complained that they wore everybody's face but

their own ; and of Diétrich it may be said that he painted in everybody's manner but his own. He did more to confound picture collectors than all other imitators put together. Hundreds of his imitations of the various masters have been sold to second-rate amateurs for original productions. If there arises any doubt about the paternity of a suspicious-looking Rembrandt, it is the common practice of dealers to place it to the account of Diétrich. If a waterfall turns up which will not pass muster for Ruysdael or Everdingen, it is ascribed to the wily German. It is the same with a disputed Claude. That 'Sunrise among Ruined Temples,' so like Lorraine, is a freak of Diétrich's. That 'Den of Bandits,' resembling Salvator, is from the same spurious source. He could so vary his pencil as to descend from the rugged rocks of Rosa into the smiling meadows of Polemberg, where nymphs with fair, round, polished limbs disported themselves in the cool streamlets of the valley. Others made copying their betters an occasional pursuit, for the purpose of improving their hands, or to comply with the wishes of their patrons ; but Diétrich delighted only to parade himself in the stolen garments of other men. Proteus-like, he was ever appearing in new and strange disguises, and ever in the extremes of fashion, so that no one could count upon him, and it is just possible that he could not count upon himself.

Yet while he copied so much and at first sight so faithfully, upon critical examination we discover that his productions are really not copies at all. Such was his caprice that he even invented a style of pictures which were as far removed from copies as they were from being

originals. He was one continued uncertainty. You cannot speak of him without laying yourself open to the charge of inconsistency, just as you cannot assert the hue of the chamelion without having your judgment set aside by the next observer. We are not quite sure how his name should be spelt, for he made a desperate attempt to alter its spelling. The *y*, which sometimes appears at the end of it instead of the *h*, was an alteration for which he might not have been able to have given satisfactory reasons. Perhaps there is no disputing that he was himself an original, although in his works he resembled everybody but himself. If he carried his eccentricities into other matters, as he did in matters of art, his acquaintance could hardly have been worth the trouble of its maintenance.

One very natural consequence of all this deception was an utter absence in his productions of the finer characteristics of the great men whom he affected to represent. His pictures lack sentiment. In him the lightning flash of genius but tips the more prominent features of the scene; it does not illumine the cavernous gloom where the eagle glance of the true artist penetrates. His pictures prove shallow upon acquaintance. Beside the great original masterpieces they hide their diminished heads. They want what the Americans term the 'true grit.' They are not chargeable with tameness; but instead of being spirited, they are often flippant. As in a second the practised ear detects the base coin by its discordant music, so the learned eye at once turns indignantly from the counterfeit by Diétrich, which the uninitiated or unscrupulous dealer would foist upon him as a genuine example of some other painter.

GERARD DOW.

WITH the ancients a work of art was a matter in which every citizen took an interest. A Grecian god or goddess in some instances went far, in its creation, to exhaust the coffers of the state. It was necessary to slaughter whole herds of elephants before an Olympian Jupiter could be encased in ivory, to say nothing of the precious metals and rare stones employed in the ornamentation of the said Jupiter. The genius of a Phidias would be equally apparent to the connoisseur if exhibited in the humbler medium of potter's clay ; but we do not question that the Athenians were wise in permitting that great creative artist to work in marble and gold. There was an inducement on the part of the sculptor to do justice to materials so costly which would not have existed had merely perishable earths been the only media at his command. Not only men of the highest culture, but the multitude are attracted and influenced by the ornate, the rare, and the valuable ; and no doubt the lofty standard of taste to which the Athenian public attained was fostered by the high regard and the profuse liberality which the government of Pericles manifested for the fine arts in the erection and adornment of public edifices. This is an example, true in all times, of the lustre that may be elicited from genius when the highest conditions for its exercise are afforded. Furnish dainty materials, and public applause, imperial honours, and the prospective renown of future ages, and what will not genius accomplish ! Indeed, the power of

intellect can never be ascertained in any people until the highest conditions of its development are supplied !

Among the Italian painters we find instances of a thorough appreciation of those art-conditions which the ancients so well understood, and made so many sacrifices to obtain. Leonardo da Vinci, who bestowed years of labour upon each work, and was never satisfied with the results of all his pains, was equally remarkable for the great care he displayed in the preparation of his materials, with a view to their durability and perfect and consistent suitableness to the work in hand. He accomplished little ; but in the pictures which proceeded from his pencil he left examples of exactness, of perfection in colouring, of light, shade, and expression, which are admitted to have advanced art centuries beyond the condition in which he found it : examples which furnished, on their completion, instructive studies to Raphael, the prince of painters, himself.

Thus Phidias and Da Vinci, the representatives of ancient and modern artistic greatness, equally exhibit a cardinal truth, far from sufficiently appreciated in our time, that too much attention cannot be paid to the perfection of the instruments with which Art perpetuates its creations. Art requires that provident forethought which calculates the means to the end. When Leo the Tenth found Da Vinci preparing the varnish for his pictures previous to making their outlines, and contemptuously remarked, that ' nothing could be expected from a man who thought of finishing his works before he had begun them,' he displayed at once his ignorance and impatience. The pontiff did not know that it was necessary to varnish over certain colours as fast as they

were laid on, and that varnish required some age before being eligible for use. It has been said of the ancients that they lived as though they were not to live a day, and executed works as though they were to last for ever. We have lived to see the time in which this order of things has suffered a violent reversion in a variety of ways.

But to confine ourselves to the Art-question, we might point to the indifference of many English painters to the quality of the colours and canvases they employ, and which, owing to this indifference, are commonly of the most worthless description. In consequence of the neglect to which we allude, a large proportion of the works of our Reynoldses, Romneys, Hoppners, Opies, Gainsboroughs, and even Turners, have long worn the aspect of decrepid age; while at the same time one might point to a score of the old Dutch masters whose pictures retain all the freshness and lustre of youth, and among these we should class the works of Rembrandt's most illustrious scholar, Gerard Dow. Unlike his great master, Gerard Dow never, during his life, trusted to a chance stroke or the force of genius for anything. The enraged Greek painter, throwing his brush at the canvas, accidentally produced an effect which he wanted, and which patience and assiduity had failed to realise for him. Our Dutch artist would have discarded such a result as illegitimate. He besieged a beauty in nature by slow and measured approaches. With him a picture was a thing of orderly progression, even as the flowers of spring gradually unfold their leaves and buds and blossoms to the sun. He hurried his work for no man, but moved with a princely ease, as much as

to say to the world, 'Other men may hurry as they please, from necessity or excitement ; but Gerard Dow at least chooses to think, and to perfect his works until he has satisfied himself.' The wife of the wealthy burgomaster paid the penalty of possessing a fair white hand by having to sit five long days while the painter transferred it to canvas.

Nor did this artist confine his fastidious manipulation to beautiful objects alone. He spent as much time in imitating an indentation on a copper stewpan as he devoted to a dimple in the refulgent cheek of beauty. Some visitors expressed astonishment at the amount of labour which the painter had bestowed upon the handle of a besom, and were coolly informed that the representation of that humble domestic instrument would require several more days to complete it. Sitters grew weary of sitting, but the artist never hastened his speed. Had his patrons come into the world for no other purpose than to serve Gerard Dow he could not have dissipated their time with greater indifference to its value. The cheek of his fair model would grow pale with hunger and fatigue while he was rounding a pearl on her neck. Flowers withered in the vase, and the ripe fruit rotted on the dish, before he had well prepared his palette. He was often compelled to seek objects for his pencil of a less perishable nature, such as carpets, elaborate table-covers, pictured tapestries, and even surgical and musical instruments came not amiss. His Cremona fiddles seemed bursting with sweet sounds, and his knives as if they were dangerous to approach. In that picture of a robust serving maid cleansing a brass pot, you fancy that you see and hear the very grit as it cuts into

the yellow metal. He is so real that to look into his 'Dentist's Shop' is as bad as having a tooth drawn. If he depicts an invalid, you might guess the state of her pulse and predict how long she has to live. Each object he transcribes is sharp or dull, transparent or opaque, rounded or squared, as it ought to be. The texture is always given with exactness, even to the minute threads in a costly robe. The string on a violin has three degrees of shadow, and not even the dust of the resin is omitted. He paints goblets of wine which would tempt an ascetic. His gentlemen smoke such delicately moulded clay pipes with so much serenity that smoking in his pictures is invested with all the grace of an accomplishment.

He carried his neatness and love of order into every department of his household, his studio, in particular, being above all criticism. Other painters were content to sit at an easel of plain deal—Gerard Dow must have one of ebony, inlaid with mother-o'-pearl. He locked up his colours in a costly cabinet as if they had been rubies, emeralds, and brilliants of the first water. He observed a ceremony on entering the sacred precincts of his *atelier*, just as the Mussulman does as he approaches the shrine of the Prophet. On arriving in front of the easel, he is said to have paused for a few moments to allow the dust to settle before he uncovered the picture. He would risk dying of suffocation rather than open his casement and incur the liability of admitting an insect to disturb his arrangements; that is, unless he wanted one to paint from, and then he might prefer, from security, to borrow one from some neighbouring entomologist.

We, however, are far from presenting our minute, painstaking, and fastidious artist as a model to be followed without reservation or discretion. Dow was a man of singularly healthy mind. His peculiarities were neither morbidity nor exaggerations. He possessed a wholesome though extreme sentiment of care. But others, instead of borrowing patient inspiration from his perfect taste, might fall into the absurdity of persecuting dirt and prosecuting delay. Shelley's passion for botanising and fondness for minutiae became so exaggerated at one period of his life that he could not look at a tuft of grass without being compelled, against his will, to count each separate blade. We counsel that study of a great example which distinguishes its merits without caricaturing its peculiarities. There is all the difference in the world between mannerism and conscientious originality.

*THE PICTURES IN THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION.*

HENRY the Eighth retained foreign painters in his pay, of whom Holbein was chief in importance ; Charles the First followed the example, selecting Rubens and Vandyke as the greatest masters of the period. Charles the Second continued the practice, and bestowed his royal patronage on Verrio the Neapolitan, and Laguerre the Frenchman, as painters of history, and on Kneller and Lely, as portrait-painters. It was not until Hogarth

appeared that England could well lay claim to a distinguished painter of pure national growth. But Hogarth was a host in himself. With Hogarth the pencil took rank with the pen as a teacher of morality. As a man this our first painter was also deserving of admiration. His pictures afford the best proof that he was neither to be bribed by the gold nor overawed by the terrors of the great ; nor was he in any way unequal to the great cause of reformation which he espoused. The fascinations of high life could not turn him aside ; neither was he discouraged by the unmitigated vices which he found to prevail among the poor, the ignorant, and the brutal.

Engravings after this master's works have circulated to an extent scarcely conceivable, and by this means people have become familiar with the nature of his genius. But these engravings for the most part afford but a poor idea of the beauties of the paintings from which they are taken ; and in no instance do they rival the fine qualities of the original etchings. Hence the great value of the present gathering together of the painter's works at Kensington, where more than thirty of his best compositions are to be seen. Critics may now perceive that our artist could portray not only folly, vice, and crime, in their ugliness and deformity, but that, moreover, he had an eye for a good comely countenance, and a ready pencil to transcribe it to canvas honestly, that is, without flattery.

Haply this fine opportunity for studying this great delineator of life and manners may not be lost upon living painters. Some of his immortal productions will be found to contain more matter than an entire col-

lection of modern pictures. This must be our excuse for not attempting the difficult labour of an elaborate description. Nor is it necessary that we should do so, seeing that the pictures speak plainly enough for themselves—some may surmise a little too plainly for the credit of mankind in general, and for the English branch of the human family in particular. A score and a half of Hogarth's pictures might furnish food for a lifetime of reflection. He would seem to have taken in hand all the wrongs, vices, follies, and crimes of the corrupt time in which he lived. The wonder is, that he did not break down under the huge self-imposed task, and our wonder is still greater when we reflect that he pursued the good work so goodnaturedly—a model for all patriots to come.

Hogarth's pictures would tell best in a small quiet gallery by themselves, where they could be brought close up to the light, where their unique excellences could be calmly considered. They certainly do not show to advantage in their present position. Owing to their remoteness from the light they wear a hue far more sombre (notwithstanding the grave nature of some of the themes depicted), than really belongs to the master, who infused his own genial spirit into all that he did. The characters and details in these picture-dramas are infinite, the expression of each character indefinitely varied, as it appears under varying circumstances, and it is only by strict attention to these nicer points that we come to understand how vast was the knowledge, experience of the world, activity, and unbounded powers of invention which the master possessed. Hogarth came upon the scene at the right moment. The refinement of those days was of a most selfish description. Lords and ladies

cultivated dainty airs and pleasing manners, but troubled very little about poor people. They left matters of great moment to take care of themselves. Every kind of infamy prevailed ; and it was thought too vulgar to trouble about such places as gambling-houses, prisons, brothels, and bedlams, and the state of the army. What do we not owe to the man by whose industry and genius so many wicked wrongs and contemptible and degrading follies were exposed to the light of day ! High-life stood aghast, fascinated, spell-bound as it were, by the revelations made in those terrible pictures. Lords and ladies had so long been flattered by the Knellers and Lelys and Jervases, that they were hardly prepared to see the whole truth, all at once, with no sort of covering to partially hide, to mitigate in some degree, the hideous aspect of the objects exposed to their gaze for the first time in the pictures of Hogarth..

Enlightened people in these our times labour, as a matter of course, to abate those evils with which our painter, in his day, battled almost single-handed. Thus the pictures describing 'The Stages of Cruelty,' those entitled 'The Cock Pit,' 'Bedlam,' 'The Fleet Prison,' 'The Harlot's Progress,' and 'Gin Lane,' might have suggested existing Societies, since established, to put down the very evils which those productions of the pencil so vividly depicted, so forcibly exposed. Towards mitigating the evils of ill-assorted marriages, made known in 'Marriage à la Mode,' something has lately been attempted. In 'The Election' plates, Hogarth laid bare the system of foul bribery and corruption which even now our legislators are still discussing how they shall put down ; and so with the Societies for the suppression

of vice and cruelty to animals, their necessity was first indicated by the pencil of Hogarth, who always laboured with a good purpose in view, and to prove how powerful an instrument the pencil may become when properly directed.

It may be interesting to some of our readers to learn the nature of the many themes, from the pencil of Hogarth, now to be seen at the International Exhibition. They are thus described in the Catalogue :—‘Portrait of Hogarth at his Easel’; two pictures from ‘The Harlot’s Progress’; a scene from the ‘Beggar’s Opera’; a view of ‘The Mall,’ and the celebrated picture of ‘The March to Finchley.’ After these we have ‘The Election,’ in four pictures, representing the ‘Election Entertainment,’ ‘Canvassing for Votes,’ ‘Polling at the Hustings,’ and the ‘Chairing of the Successful Member.’ Then follows the portrait of ‘Mrs. Hogarth,’ succeeded by a series of paintings illustrating ‘The Rake’s Progress,’ which are thus enumerated :—‘The Inheritance,’ ‘The Rake’s Levée,’ ‘The Orgie,’ ‘The Arrest,’ ‘The Marriage,’ ‘The Gaming House,’ ‘The Fleet Prison,’ and ‘Bedlam.’ The ‘Marriage à la Mode’ series is thus divided :—‘The Marriage Contract,’ ‘Shortly after the Marriage,’ ‘The Visit to the Quack Doctor,’ ‘The Countess’s Dressing-room,’ ‘The Duel and Death of the Earl,’ and lastly, ‘The Death of the Countess.’

In addition, the collection is further enriched by the paintings of ‘Southwark Fair,’ ‘A Conversation,’ ‘A Conversation at Wanstead House,’ and ‘The Strolling Actresses’; together with portraits of ‘Captain Coram,’ ‘Mrs. Robinson as “Fenella,”’ ‘Lavinia Fenton as “Polly Peachum,”’ ‘A Head,’ and a sketch of ‘The Shrimp Girl.’

After Hogarth English painters again became more courtly and complacent, and dipped their pencils in milder, softer hues.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, the intellectual, polite First President of the Royal Academy, saw only in the sitters who thronged his studio the better side of human nature, and those whose lineaments he transferred to canvas appear wanting in no outward sign of virtue and intelligence. In representing his patrons thus amiable, the artist may have aspired, by emulation, to make those of them amiable who displayed a leaning in the opposite direction, so that, in the end, they might become worthy of their pictures. Certain it is that he blended roses and pearls on the cheeks of his women of rank and fortune with a prodigality before unheard of. Pope, in some flattering verses to the painter Jervas, thus alludes to that indifferent limner's productions :—

‘Beauty, frail flower, which every season fears,
Blooms in thy colours for a thousand years.’

This lengthened immortality did not belong to the colours of Reynolds. The pearliness remains, but in too many instances the rose tints have faded from lip and cheek, so that many of those whom he sought to immortalise appear to us now only as the ghosts of what they were, to all appearance still in the flesh, but, as an eminent critic has remarked, ‘somewhere between the living and the dead.’ At Kensington is the famous portrait of Nelly O'Brian. She sits in her bower of rich, dark shrubs, pallid, but not with grief, for the gentlest of hearts sends lustre to her soft grey eyes. Old Time never did a crueller wrong than when he thus

ruthlessly snatched the roses from the cheeks of Nelly O'Brian.

Judging from a few pictures by Reynolds, which have come down to us with a small degree of their youthful freshness still remaining, we might venture to affirm, what indeed has often been urged, that out of Venice Sir Joshua had no rival as a colourist. His forms are always grand and imposing, though frequently disproportionate, and, great as was his familiarity with the human countenance, we have seen instances in which the features were sadly awry. It is not to Sir Joshua that we must look for faultless contours, for his forms can hardly be said to have any ; but if we look to him for character, sentiment, and dignity, we shall not be disappointed.

He was particularly happy in his pictures of children, as some examples in the present collection will prove. It is a vulgar saying, that 'babies are all alike.' Mothers know their own notwithstanding, and Sir Joshua knew how to distinguish nice differences in the infantine state. In a number of children, some of them mere infants, now exhibited, we have as many different characters in the bud, and it is impossible not to feel that those several infants will grow up into so many men and women, differing alike in character as in outward form. No man, not even Lavater himself, possessed a profounder knowledge of human nature as found in the saloons of high life than Reynolds. Among the many examples in the gallery we must not overlook one lent by her Majesty—the portrait of the infant Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester, who is represented playing on the ground with a rough terrier. This picture

will bear out our remarks touching the painter's intimacy with the inmates of the nursery. Again, in further proof of this, we might point to the life-like portraits of Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire, and her infant daughter. There are by far too few titled mothers like this duchess, who engages in the pleasing duties of a mother with a zest and an energy quite natural. In little Miss Boothby we have quaintness and innocence combined. The droll creature appears before us in a mob-cap, playing at Grandmamma. In another instance pretty Miss Price is seen in a quiet grove in the character of Little Bo-peep, followed by her pet lambs. The old bachelor-painter's love for the juvenile world must have been intense, or he never could have put their innocent faces and endearing ways upon canvas in a manner so resistless. After all, it is by no means certain whether those who have children know them better or love them better than those who have them not. Old unmarried aunts and uncles are unquestionably the best customers to the toymakers, and may often be seen making stealthy purchases at the confectioners'.

Thomas Gainsborough was a gentleman of retiring manners, attached to his home, passionately fond of music, and a hater of Reynolds. As a painter he had a lighter, freer hand than perhaps any other painter, ancient or modern. The *élite* of the saloon and the humble rustic maiden were equally precious in his eyes. His girl at the spring, without shoes and sparsely clad, and the aristocratic boy, majestic in satin robes, in their extremes, attest his power. Gainsborough imparted to his forms an ideal grace all his own. His trees even bow their heads gracefully as if in obedience to the

gentlest of zephyrs, beneath skies serene as the painter's own heart. It were well for us all could we see the earth and its inhabitants as bright and good as Thomas Gainsborough saw and painted them. It is not possible to see the world as he painted it without feeling disposed to be at peace with mankind, high and low, for high and low appear equally engaging in his pictures.

He was happy in all that he did. His pastoral scenes are all smiles, his valleys all happy valleys. The people whom he painted are people to be trusted—people to love. Who having beheld his Mrs. Graham could repine at not having seen a veritable angel? Where is the maiden, having once cast eyes upon, could ever after forget, the noble youth in blue satin? Gainsborough's very cows wind down the hill as if they moved to some gentle air; his pigs are more comely and engaging than other people's pigs, eating their food with a cleanliness, as if they had a reputation for nice breeding, and were anxious not to lose it. Was ever beheld such a farmer's daughter as Gainsborough's? Seated on an old grey horse, and smiling all over, she carries sunlight into the shady lane, surrounded like a queen by her body-guard of ploughmen and carters, all ready to do battle for her, and mortally vexed that no opportunity will present itself to enable them to test their loyalty. We regret that this picture is not in the present collection. But we are consoled by the presence in one picture of Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell, seated on a primrose bank. One is never tired of looking at these two ladies—they look so happy in each other's society. What fortunate men the husbands of such women must have been! One of the ladies, Mrs. Tickell or Mrs.

Sheridan, we know not which, holds a music-book. She would seem to have been singing, and truly she has a merry, singing face, and we should surmise a joyous, ringing voice. Her companion is also possessed of a sweet, open countenance. They are all intelligence and vivacity, with eyes alike bright and piercing, and calculated to do almost any amount of mischief.

But we must not forget 'The Girl with the Pitcher,' whom everybody has seen in prints of all sizes, not one of them doing anything like justice to the original painting. This picture reminds one not of canvas and colour in the least. If memory does not deceive us, in that same girl with the pitcher we recognise an old acquaintance. Where could it have been? In some out-of-the-way place we have met. The day had barely dawned as we passed by the little cottage among the trees, as a little maiden, like the one before us, with a fine oval face, without shoes—it were a pity to hide such exquisite feet—came down to the spring for water. What brings the matter more forcibly to mind is the dog which she hugs so closely to her side, and without which it would appear she never goes abroad on any account; her reasons being, in the first place, that she is very much attached to the mute companion of her many lonely hours (there are no other children thereabouts); and further, she has a vague suspicion that some one might steal her pet, her only treasure in the world. Not that she is conscious of poverty; she drinks of the spring, and feeds on brown bread steeped in fresh milk, which her father, the hedger and ditcher, earns by the sweat of his brow. In summer she lives in sun or shade, as her fancy leads her; in winter, she nestles in the chimney-

corner, a comfortable nook, where the father, who loves her, smokes his evening pipe, and where the mother smiles on both. Happy family, untroubled by extremes! Careless and calm, because they are guiltless of wrong! Without guile, fearing none, hating none, with nothing to lose and nothing to gain, living from hand to mouth; the sun rises and finds them penniless, and the sun sets and leaves them no richer.

One would like to give that rustic maiden a handful of money (we know not how it is, but Gainsborough's pictures always make one feel generous), and yet, too, there is something makes one hesitate to offer alms to the poorest of Gainsborough's people. They have all naturally a certain polite bearing, as though they came of a good stock and were not acquainted with the fact: which is well, otherwise they might have got high notions and have taken to repining, like the heroines of so many modern pictures and dramas, and then they would have been fit for nothing, and we should have had nothing to say about them. We are before another of Gainsborough's pictures, called 'The Cottage Door.' The cottage is in the very heart of a dense wood, shut off from all the world, and well-nigh from the light of day. The rustic mother stands at the door, among her rosy children—a large young family to provide for, but made easy by the squire, one of Gainsborough's squires, and of course a gentleman, who lets them have the cottage rent free, and as much milk for the fetching as they can all drink, which is no small quantity.

Richard Wilson, whose landscapes are now placed among the chief glories of the English school of paint-

ing, was a contemporary of Reynolds and Gainsborough.

The remains of ancient temples and tombs, lakes and waterfalls, overhung by frowning rocks, were the materials of which Wilson composed his pictures. Others made cold, formal compositions out of similar objects, but Wilson contemplated those relics of the past with a poet's eye. He sought, not second-hand, as others had done, but among the ruins themselves, for the inspiration which animated his pencil. He had the powers to realise the great, nay almost the sublimity of an extensive prospect, by a few strokes of the crayon. Of this fact, a published volume, engraved in imitation of original sketches which the artist made in Italy, furnishes a striking proof. With his brush well laden with colour, he would dash in broad masses of country, revelling in earth, water, and air, with a confidence and a power that belongs not to these our times. Looking at his representations, the spectator is hurried out of the ordinary daily life of things into other lands where, in the remote past, the plains bristled with the spears of heroes, immortalised by epic poets: and to sylvan haunts, where of old altars were raised to Pan.

Wilson sometimes sought to people his landscapes with Pagan deities to illustrate the fabulous stories of classic lands. In this he failed. He had high authority for making the attempt, notwithstanding. Italian painters of renown had enlivened similar scenes with what they doubtless considered appropriate figures, suggested by ancient poetry and fragments of antique sculpture. Of this class of pictures by Wilson, one in the present collection, representing the 'Destruction of Niobe's Children,' is not more to our liking than it was to the taste of

Reynolds, who, if we remember rightly, condemned this work in one of his Lectures delivered at the Royal Academy. Apart from the nature of the theme, the composition is grand; the storm-clouds which cover a large portion of the canvas sublime. In the companion picture, a view of 'Mæcenas' Villa,' we perceive how grand and yet how simple a treatment he could bestow upon subjects of an elevated character. Another large 'landscape' in the gallery displays the artist in all his strength. A clump of tall trees, a ruined frieze and some rustic figures for foreground, relieved against a soft balmy sky, remote city and plains beyond, make up the scene. The trees start up out of the earth, and stretch forth their arms over the valley as if to stay the winds in their course.

Wilson was not coldly classical. He pored with rapture over the beauties of his own native mountains of Wales. He could become familiar, and he was ever genial. A bright morning scene on the bank of 'The River Dee,' now present, might almost work a miracle and restore animation to a corpse. Yet Wilson was a neglected man, and those who knew his worth made few efforts to save him from want. He might have starved, had not a relation bequeathed him a small estate when he was too old to enjoy it. He returned to the home of his fathers, and found death at the porch to bid him welcome; and it were well, for the stricken painter nourished in his heart only bitter remembrances of hopes deferred, of burning aspirations stifled by neglect, not to say by disrespect and contempt. Wilson's pictures were of a refined nature, and not calculated to attract the vulgar of his day; but we are entirely at a loss to account

for the treatment which he experienced at the hands of the enlightened few to whom his genius was manifest as the sun at noon-day.

George Morland has, very properly, not been forgotten by the Fine Art Commissioners. The Exhibition contains several of his pictures, before which thousands will halt. They are, doubtless, true pictures of rural life in England nearly a century ago. A very few strokes of Morland's pencil made the canvas glow. Country squires, farmers, gipsies, smugglers, innkeepers, agricultural labourers, and domestic animals, were his delight, and fully appreciated by him. He was known on the coast, he was at home in the cottage, and welcome at the hall; he lingered about lanes, and he encamped upon commons; he might have dwelt with the gentry, but his peculiar taste led him to prefer an alehouse and the company of stable boys. In one picture at the International Exhibition, called 'The Reckoning,' we have a capital stable scene. A vigorous old farmer having done business at market, has called at a wayside inn to rest his horse and to indulge himself in a dozen whiffs of tobacco. For these accommodations he is about to tender payment, and hence the title of the picture. In the stable are some dogs—a spaniel, mastiff, and terrier, painted to the life. The old horse, in particular, is inimitable.

Although Morland's scenes are not of a kind in which one would expect refinement, yet he is never vulgar. In spite of his intemperate habits, he must after all have been by nature a gentleman. The other paintings by this master are 'A Seashore—Wild Fowl Shooting'; 'Sheep,' and two others respectively entitled 'The Gipsies.' In the latter pictures we are introduced to a

couple of squires of very opposite natures. In one a testy old gentleman emerges suddenly from a bypath in a wood, vowing vengeance on those strolling vagabonds—the gipsies. In the other a warm-hearted squire reins in his horse, and gives some people of the same class a shilling with which to drink his health. The characters of the two men are finely contrasted.

We have shown that Hogarth, Reynolds, and Gainsborough are well represented. Some might, nay will, object that Reynolds might have been seen to better advantage ; but what will be said for George Romney, who, after having painted so many pictures in close rivalry with Reynolds, is now seen in one picture only, the portrait of ‘Admiral Hardy’? James Barry, the painter of the series of pictures at the rooms of the Society of Arts, is made known to strangers by a portrait of his mother, and the composition of Adam and Eve from the Adelpi. Opie is beheld in a forcible portrait of himself, by himself, ‘The Blind Beggar and his Daughter,’ and by an energetic but vulgar large work, entitled ‘Rizzio.’

After Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Wilson, we go wandering down the gallery seeking for another great master to talk about. For the ice-cold efforts of Sir Benjamin West we care little and have little to say. His best picture, ‘The Death of General Wolfe,’ is present, and worth attention. Formal classical productions like ‘The Oath of Annibal,’ and ‘The Departure of Regulus,’ will not attract much notice, and do not deserve it.

Lord Lyndhurst sends two fine works, by his father, John Singleton Copley, which are remarkable for power-

ful grouping and vigorous touch. In the picture of 'The Death of Major Pierson at Jersey, in 1780,' we have unquestionably a great historical work. Copley was not over sentimental, and his pictures do not harrow up the feelings to a painful degree ; but he laid on his colours to good purpose. The group of figures attending Major Pierson, more especially the single figure of the tall negro who is about to fire his musket, are all we could desire them to be. The 'Family Group,' by the same artist, represents the painter's own family ; and the fine rosy-cheeked boy whom the mother is caressing is none other than the Lord Lyndhurst who is now verging on his ninetieth year. The other pictures by Copley are the 'Portraits of the Princesses Amelia, Sophia, and Augusta'—a picture only inferior to Reynolds in colour ; and a smaller production, known as 'The Boy and the Squirrel,' being the first picture exhibited by Copley in this country. The Americans claim Copley for their own, and as a matter of course are not a little proud of him. In proof of this, a few years ago, the people of Boston went so far as to give a large price for an example of his pencil to hang in the gallery of the painter's native city of Boston.

Hilton's immense 'Crucifixion' exhibits some good and bold modelling, particularly in the figures of the Roman soldiers. There are also present this artist's expressive picture of 'The Murder of the Innocents,' and the large commonplace group of 'The Angel delivering St. Peter from Prison.'

Patrick Nasmyth was another unfortunate painter of landscapes, which were not understood and appreciated until the artist had been some time in his grave. We

are more surprised at the want of encouragement which Nasmyth experienced, seeing that his landscapes have all the qualities of popular pictures. He painted woods, roads, and lanes, made pleasant to the eye by oak trees, weeds, wild flowers, and sunny skies reflected in pools of clear water. The connoisseur will sometimes object that Patrick Nasmyth's colours are opaque to a fault, and this will be evident to those who pay particular attention to the artist's example, entitled 'A Pond with Burdocks.' The broken foreground and water, with its margin of sedge, thatched cottages, and oak trees, gently agitated by the breeze, together with the bed of huge burdocks (a plant to which the painter was most partial), are really rendered in a very pleasant manner. There are two other pictures in the collection by the same master.

A little later we come to Old Crome, of Norwich, whose landscapes have a mellowness of colour and quiet power which might have done credit to Reynolds himself. Crome, like Wilson and Gainsborough, was an enthusiastic lover of the woods. Among other pictures from his hand is one called, 'The Great Oak Tree.' The monarch of the wood throws his myriad of gnarled and twisted arms over a quiet pool, and two or three cows repose in an open glade beyond. Of such a scene Ruysdael would have made a masterpiece of finish, but we doubt if that able Dutchman would have invested his tree with all the picturesque and venerable attributes of old age as Crome has done. In a view of 'Mousehold Heath' we have a study of a sandbank, on which a plentiful assortment of thistles and other weeds have taken root. No innovations, no attempts at softening and improving are

attempted upon the rugged truth. The stuff of which this picture is composed is of the most familiar kind ; the fields beyond the sandbank wear a barren aspect. There might seem little to attract in such a place as Mousehold Heath, but Crome saw beauty in the blossoming thistles crowning that barren locality. It is said that the painter Weenix never painted a picture which did not contain a thistle (a fancy not easily explained). Crome only painted thistles when they were peculiar to the scene ; his pictures are always consistent. He delighted in double hedgerows, and leafy, grassy nooks, where the wild rose and elder grew, and solitary lanes protected by banks of white loam, steep, crumbling, and irregular ; where thatched cottages with gloomy uncouth gables overhung the way. Norfolk was his home, his delight ; he never seems to have gone beyond it even in thought. There he was born, there he painted. At Norwich he founded a small school of art, which has since exercised a fine influence over the whole country. We wonder the people there do not put up a statue to this painter in return for the good which he bestowed upon them, by creating among them a love and taste for art. ‘Are you a judge of paintings?’ asked a lady of a gentleman one day in our presence. The gentleman deliberately replied in the affirmative, and modestly qualifying his answer, he thus continued in a manner, quite natural, ‘and I ought to be, for am I not a native of Norwich, the birth-place of old Crome?’

Sir Thomas Lawrence (of whom we have next to speak), if we are to judge by his pictures, painted only people possessing high intelligence and superior personal attractions. He began to draw as an infant almost : at

sixteen he was a proficient delineator of the human countenance, in fact, a great prodigy. Nature made him an artist before his time, and the Royal Academy were compelled to elect him one of their number at an earlier age than they ever elected anyone else before or since. Nine of his more mature portraits are in the International Exhibition. Lawrence's pictures have an artificial grace bordering upon affectation ; many of them are somewhat flimsy in substance ; and, notwithstanding occasional fine contrasts, his colouring, always intended to be cheerful, is nearly always inclined to be heavy and opaque. We are in no way surprised that everybody sat to him. He had all the qualities of which popular painters are composed ; he was essentially a court painter, and a good one. The portrait of the 'Earl of Eldon,' now in the gallery, is a fine example. The earl has a cold grey eye, silvery hair and eyebrows, and, spite of the painter's efforts, anything but a benevolent look. The colour in this picture, although heavy, as usual, is pure, crisp, and firm in texture. A more characteristic work is the group of portraits of the graceful 'Countess Grey and her young Daughters,' who are represented seated on a terrace, from whence the eye wanders on through a grove of tall trees. But the greatest favourite of this artist's pictures is present in a circular composition, called 'Nature,' a picture known far and wide by engravings. The painter has depicted two beautiful and healthful young girls, all smiles and dimples, entwined in each other's arms, with an ease and grace that Correggio might have despaired of surpassing. The other examples now exhibited by Sir Thomas are the portraits of 'Pope Pius the Seventh,' 'Sir Humphry Davy,' of the 'Earl

of Liverpool' (very excellent), 'Mr. R. Davis,' 'Lady Bentinck,' the 'Countess of Shaftesbury' (when a child), and 'Mr. James Spedding.'

Sir David Wilkie is known best as a painter of English and Scottish life and manners among the humbler classes. For many years the windows of the chief print-shops were monopolised by fine line engravings after his works, and are thus familiar to all but the rising generation. Of late years we have missed the 'Greenwich Pensioners,' 'The Rent Day,' 'The Penny Wedding,' 'Blind Man's Buff,' 'Distraint for Rent,' and many other subjects which in their day served to detain and to amuse, not to say instruct and improve, the passengers in our great thoroughfares. Flemish pictures of the Teniers and Ostade class may have suggested to Wilkie the framework of the class of compositions to which he chiefly devoted his genius; but the ideas, the incidents depicted by him, were all his own, and he was in the strictest sense an original painter. Late in life Spain furnished him with subjects, some of which were also engraved.

In the present collection an opportunity is afforded of forming a true estimate of this master. Among others 'The Parish Beadle' and 'The Penny Wedding' will serve to mark his early manner, while the 'Confessional' and the 'Maid of Saragossa' will indicate his later, broader, and firmer style of treatment. It seems to have been the rule with most great painters to elaborate much at first, as if feeling their way, making sure as it were, and eventually to divide their pictures into larger, broader masses, and to make fewer strokes of the pencil produce the effects they desired; but we know of no painter whose mode of painting underwent all at once so great

a change as Sir David's. His domestic scenes lack the decision, crispness of touch, and silvery purity of Teniers the younger. His scenes in Spain, while graphic, are in the main dull and heavy in tone. Yet he could be forcible. In 'The Parish Beadle' the characters are varied and strongly marked, and the modelling firm. He could be pathetic, as witness his 'Distraint for Rent,' unfortunately absent on the present occasion. 'The Penny Wedding' and 'Blind Man's Buff' show how heartily, how cheerfully, and how naturally he could sympathise with the lot of the poor. Faed alone in these times might lay claim to Wilkie's title of the poor man's painter, but Faed lacks the cheerfulness and ease which belonged to his famous countryman. A sunny, summer-like atmosphere harmonised with the simple genius of Wilkie. He peopled his cottages with healthful, honest, trusty, light-hearted folks. With him sentiment never degenerated into morbidity. His heroes and heroines are not of the kind to require looking after. The idea of hanging or drowning would never occur to any one of them through a century of misfortune. He is never coarse, frivolous, or vulgar, and certainly he is never sublime.

Gilbert Stewart Newton came young from America and settled in England. The works of this master are not calculated to enlist the attention of the multitude so readily as Wilkie's; yet they are more refined, quite as forcible, and no less true. Newton's illustrations of fine passages from English poetry nearly always do justice to the poets. He was particularly happy in transcribing to canvas the beauties of Goldsmith and Sterne. Examples of his fine appreciation of those two authors will be found in the gallery. Looking at his pictures, the

spectator is often not well decided whether to laugh or weep, and sometimes compromises the matter and performs both operations at once. The authors of the 'Sentimental Journey,' and the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' prescribed gravity and gaiety in about the same proportions as Newton combined them in his pictures. Take, for instance, the composition of the 'Vicar of Wakefield' endeavouring to reconcile his wife to Olivia Primrose. The penitent girl, all pale and trembling, leans for support on the shoulders of her forgiving father, and turns away her face from the forbidding, wrathful mother. We almost hear the words of that amiable man, Dr. Primrose, when, addressing his obdurate wife, he exclaims, with all the gravity of father and pastor combined: 'I entreat, woman, that my words may now be marked once for all: I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness; the real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us; let us not, therefore, increase them by dissensions among each other; if we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censoring world, and keep each other in countenance.' Mark the swelling throat, and rigid face of the proud woman to whom these words are addressed. The gallery contains nothing finer.

Again in 'Yorick and the Grisette' we have great variety of expression. Sterne, in describing the scene which Newton has painted, observes that there are certain combined looks of simple subtlety—where whim and sense, and seriousness and nonsense, are so blended that all the languages of Babel let loose together could not express them. Whether the painter has overcome the whole

difficulty here set forth by the author of the 'Sentimental Journey,' we care not to ask; we feel that Newton's 'Yorick and the Grisette' is a picture such as Yorick himself might have produced had he been a painter, and treated the subject in his happiest manner. The subject of 'Shylock and Jessica,' often attempted, was never more prettily treated than by Newton. 'Captain Macheath upbraided by Polly and Lucy' preserves a fine distinction in the character of the two young ladies who figure in the 'Beggar's Opera.' These are the chief works of Newton now present at Kensington.

William Collins was a gentle painter, not unworthy of the good company of Wilkie, Constable, and Newton, where we find him. His delight was to paint coast and lane scenes, in which the figures play a prominent part. His 'Bird-catchers' are a number of boys assembled at early morning on a common, with decoy-birds and nets. The whole picture is animated and true to the life. 'Happy as a King' represents a number of children swinging on a gate. The bigger boy on the topmost rail enjoys himself amazingly. This picture is far more skillfully finished than the 'Bird-catchers.' The rosy-cheeked village children seem to rend the air and make the woods echo with their clamour. They are buoyant without rudeness. The lane beyond is extremely well painted. 'The Stray Kitten' is a particular favourite with the public, to whom, like the last-mentioned picture, it is well known by a fine line engraving. There are other pictures by Collins in the gallery, namely, 'The Skittle Players,' 'A Frost Scene,' 'Rustic Civility,' 'Minnow Catchers,' 'A Scene on the Coast of Norfolk,' 'The Morning Bath' and 'The Shrimpers,' all of which are in their way fault-

less. Collins had few pretensions, but he succeeded in all that he attempted. His coast scenes are bright and sunny, his lanes shady, cool, and inviting, and both are rendered doubly agreeable by the presence of happy faces.

Richard Parkes Bonington, a little known artist, died young and full of promise in 1828, having spent little of his professional life in this country. Many will make acquaintance with his works for the first time at the International Exhibition. A picture of 'Venice' will inform competent judges that England lost a promising painter in Bonington. 'Venice,' though painted by such a young artist, has the breadth and force of a master. Another view in Venice, with a procession of monks, is more laboured, but almost as firm in style as a picture from the pencil of Tintoretto. We imagine that this picture has been seriously injured ; otherwise we cannot account for its want of atmosphere, particularly in the sky. 'Francis I. and his Sister,' 'A Turk,' 'A French Coast Scene,' and a 'View of the Coast of Normandy,' are four other good specimens by Bonington.

John Constable's admirers, and they are many, will not complain that the painter of 'The Lock' and 'The Cornfield' has been neglected. In the Exhibition his finest pictures abound. One might well spend an entire visit in their enjoyment. We forget we are looking at pictures ; we follow the waggon across the ford ; we look for the haymakers in the meadow beyond ; we track the fleeting clouds, note their changing hues, and pause in anticipation of a gentle shower. Rainbows span richly-wooded and well-watered plains, where elder flowers light up shadowy groves of oak and ash, where the dark earth teems with all manner of luxuriant weeds and flowers,

grouped, contrasted, massed, woven into harmony as if by Nature's own hand.

Constable, like Crome, loved to linger about certain favoured localities, and there will be found throughout his pictures a sameness of character which, however, never becomes wearisome. He follows nature closely, and nature never wearies. How closely he followed nature we may perceive in his pictures called 'The Haywain,' and in 'The Dell in Helmingham Park.' Where his trees overhang the streamlet in accessible spots they have moss-covered bark and symmetrical luxuriant branches; in places where cattle browse, the trunks of the trees are worn bare, the lower branches irregular, broken, and stunted; the earth uneven and scanty of vegetation. If he painted water you may almost guess what kind of animate objects the water should contain. In a much frequented spot only a few blades of coarse grass and a common weed or two remain. Rare herbs and flowers love seclusion. These things our painter faithfully observed and followed, and as we love the truth, so we are always glad to welcome it no less upon canvas than in type. The pencil should no more outrage truth than the tongue or the pen. Yet how many landscapes are mere inventions, or, at the best, mere combinations of odd studies made on various occasions and brought together without regard to truth or propriety! Men 'who never swept dew from lawn' aspire to paint the fields, and fail as a matter of course. The fields, as Peter Pindar observes, do not resemble 'green baize'; 'a rushlight' is a poor substitute for the sun; and, in a word—

'There's very little landscape in a garret.'

Charles Robert Leslie was another genial painter, who could be tenderly pathetic without becoming feeble and morbid, and intensely humorous without degenerating into coarseness. His pencil found a way to the hearts of all. He chose for his themes the choicest passages of our literature, and peopled his canvases with the creations of our greatest poets and prose writers ; and, as if a field so vast did not content him, he helped Dr. Smollett to bring home to the English mind the adventures of the renowned Don Quixote. The picture of 'Sancho in the apartments of the Duchess,' apart from the droll Sancho himself, is one of the most beautiful interiors in the world. In the embellishment of the apartment the most fastidious taste has been consulted ; but the crowning effort, spite of the fascinations of the duchess and her maids, centres in Sancho, who, having examined the apartment, exclaims, 'Now, my lady duchess, I am assured there is no skulker listening, and that we are not overheard by any but this good company, I will, without fear or trembling, answer all the questions of your grace ; and, first and foremost, I will own that I look upon my master, Don Quixote, as an incurable madman,' &c. On the canvas of Leslie, Sancho seems to speak the very words of Cervantes.

The next picture out of ten in the gallery which will best serve to mark the greatness of this painter, is that which brings before our eyes 'The Dinner at Page's House.' 'Sweet Ann Page' never looked more bewitching, nor Slender more silly, nor Falstaff more captivating, in his own opinion. Contrasted with the bright, intelligent face of Ann Page is the dull, leaden physiognomy of poor Simple. A ray of light strikes on the

vacant eye of the poor serving-man. Slender has just asked him for the 'Book of Riddles,' and he is trying to collect what little sense he has, and to satisfy himself that memory had not deceived him when he told his master that he had lent the said book 'to Alice Shortcake upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight before Michaelmas.' In a picture of 'Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church,' Leslie lights up a page of Addison. Sir Roger appears among his humble friends in the old churchyard on a calm Sunday morning, and blesses the widow and the orphans on his way to prayer. We return to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It is 'May Day,' and all the folks of the village and lords and ladies gay are assembled on the green to enjoy the homely sports of the times. Bright streamers from maypole and tent wave in the breeze, and tall elms spread a canopy of green drapery over the lawn. But while Leslie is so happy in the accessories of his compositions, it is to the character and sentiment with which his pictures abound that we must look for evidence of the thinker and artist. He attempted and mastered the most difficult themes. He could be humorous, pathetic, and solemn. The pictures by Leslie in the gallery not directly referred to in these remarks are entitled, 'Queen Catherine,' 'Children Playing at Horses,' 'Fairlop Fair,' 'A Head—Perdita,' 'Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena, deceived by the Curate, Barber, and Dorothea,' and 'The Queen receiving the Sacrament after her Coronation.'

Barry, Haydon, and Cross, are names of mournful interest in the history of the English school of painting. We need not repeat at length the story of James Barry, who, when his brother historical painters refused, under-

took to decorate the great room in the Adelphi, where the Society for the Encouragement of Arts held their meetings. He was so great an enthusiast that he not only undertook the work, but at the same time, with characteristic generosity, disdained all mention of remuneration. He began those large pictures representing 'The Progress of Civilisation,' so it is recorded, with a capital of only 16s. Of course the work soon came to a standstill for want of materials. Then we find him petitioning in vain for an income of only 100*l.* a year to enable him to proceed, and this sum he promised to repay—by an exhibition of the work when completed. He received fifty guineas by instalments from the Society at the time, and a donation of two hundred guineas and a gold medal after the labour was ended—a mere trifle when we reflect that the task occupied seven years. We have said enough to show the kind of man the art public had to deal with in James Barry. He might, at a small cost in money, and a large amount of forbearance, have been moulded into a great painter. As it was, his disappointments made him irritable and sarcastic, and the Council of the Royal Academy got rid of him altogether. In the eyes of those Academicians the six large noble pictures in the Adelphi painted under circumstances so romantic went for little or nothing. We regret that a couple of those very pictures are not present at the International Exhibition. Perhaps there were difficulties in the way of removal. They are compositions calculated to win the admiration of continental critics, who would know better than Englishmen how to appreciate such lofty aspirations in a painter. Barry died of neglect and despair in 1806.

In 1846 Benjamin Robert Haydon, after having lingered out a similar career, painting large canvases and battling with obscure distress and haughty Academicians, ended his life in a manner still more to be regretted. Later, only the other day, as it were, John Cross died without a murmur, a martyr to high art. There might have been some excuse for the neglect of those intractable men, Barry and Haydon, but the case of John Cross offers no redeeming features. It was known and believed full well that had this young painter been afforded a fair opportunity he would not have abused it, but would, in all probability, have arrived at distinction in historical painting, and yet he was left to teach school-girls to draw at a salary of 40*l.* a year.

Haydon has two compositions in the gallery, namely, 'The Mock Election' and the 'Judgment of Solomon.' From the latter work we are best enabled to understand the artist's genius. Haydon was one of those impetuous energetic men who would, had he been permitted, have covered with pictures the walls of half the public buildings in London. Fortunately in this respect he was not allowed too much licence. A want of refinement is manifest in nearly all that he did. Much as he talked of the ancients, he profited very little by the remains of the old Grecian sculptors. He had the courage to attempt themes the most difficult, such as might have daunted Michael Angelo himself. The 'Judgment of Solomon,' by Haydon, now in the Exhibition, is a picture not without force; but the people who take part in the scriptural drama are without dignity. The action of the young king is very pretty, almost descending to burlesque. The elders at the throne are common to vulgarity, and

too much of a family pattern and complexion. The picture has other faults. Apart from a certain daring in the drawing, the quality of the execution is very inferior. The touch is careless and coarse, and the colouring utterly wanting in tenderness and beauty.

We have more pliable stuff in the work entitled 'Richard Cœur de Lion forgiving Bertrand de Gourdon,' by John Cross. Every inch of this large composition is evidence of that carefulness which is an attribute of modest worth in an artist trying to deserve the praise of enlightened men. Here no attempt has been made to snatch at public honours. All the talent, skill, and patience which the youthful painter could command, and every shilling he possessed he put into this work, in order that it might be an honour to the master who taught him, and to the country of his birth. Little he cared for himself; he became famous through the real worth that was in him. He was a skilful mechanic, for in his necessity he made link by link the chain armour from which he painted the armour in the group of which we are speaking. He was so humble, that no man was so astonished as himself when the verdict was declared in his favour, and the purchase of his 'Richard Cœur de Lion' by the Government was made known.

We have touched upon the subject of victims to high art, believing that their sad fate may help to account for the paucity of historical pictures of a distinctive character in the English gallery. When in a short period we come to treat of the contributions of our continental neighbours, we may have to admit that these matters are managed more satisfactorily in France, Belgium, Germany, and even in Spain.

If we want to discover the poverty in Haydon's colour, we have only to contrast his 'Judgment of Solomon' with the productions of his contemporary, William Etty, whose series of large compositions illustrating the story of Judith are near at hand. The scene wherein Judith stands by the couch of the slumbering Holofernes, and raising her sword on high, exclaims, 'Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day !' is very effective. The painter has selected a lofty type of womankind for his heroine, and robed her with becoming splendour ; while the spacious tent of the invader is crowded with many spoils, vessels in silver and gold glimmering in the light of the dimly burning lamp, or half concealed in the darksome recesses of massive draperies. In the picture where the maid is represented seated among the weary nodding guards, the artist has depicted to intensity the feeling of agonising suspense ; but all interest centres in the closing act of the tragedy, where mistress and maid are engaged concealing the head in a sack. Haydon would have made a sad affair of such a direful theme. Etty relies throughout mostly upon his powers as a colourist, and the spectator is held captive, spell-bound by the blandishments of the palette, from which there is no escape into the daylight of reality and unmitigated horrors.

To conclude in a few words our estimate of these four painters, we should say that the productions of Barry and Haydon, while abounding in talent, are deficient in natural warmth. Barry sometimes pleases, because his forms, though cold, are chaste and correct. Haydon astonishes by his hurried, wrathful, reckless manner, but he never charms the eye nor soothes the heart. Etty

would allure us to distraction by the voluptuousness of his forms, only that those forms possess no sort of individuality. He could seem to have consulted nature for the tints, and cold plaster casts for the limbs of his everlasting nymphs. Colour was his delight, and Titian his deity. John Cross's successful works are the result rather of untiring patience and severe study than genius. He was in a very small degree poetical, but he possessed so much ingenuity as enabled him to render the human form with greater correctness than perhaps any other English painter has done. His figures always explain themselves by appropriate gesture. The very hands and feet may be said to talk. Nor are Cross's compositions wanting in dignity. His own earnest soul is impressed on those huge canvases which filled all his thoughts and wasted away all his strength.

We thought it advisable to treat at length of the peculiar merits of the founders of the English school of painting and their more celebrated successors. The works of departed painters become scarce and difficult of access, and it is only on rare occasions like the present that we may gladden our eyes with the works of men like Gainsborough, Reynolds, Hogarth, and Wilson. Anon, at the fall of the leaf, they will disappear from their present temporary home, to discolour and decay in the mansions of their several owners, scattered over the length and breadth of the land, whither we may not follow them. For like reasons we intend shortly to make our remarks on some of the many fine pictures which Continental painters have been good enough to lend our Fine Art Commissioners for exhibition. So excellent an opportunity for acquiring a knowledge of living foreign

masters may never occur again in our time. Under these circumstances many living English painters of great celebrity can only receive a passing notice at our hands, at least for the present. Public galleries, private collections, and annual exhibitions of modern pictures abound, and vast multitudes may, and do, now contemplate and appreciate the beauties of living English artists; and, moreover, public criticism has become a necessary feature in every newspaper of character, so that the painter of any pretensions to distinction is in less danger of being overlooked than formerly. Of the works of living painters the more remarkable examples have been selected. In most instances we should presume that the painter himself made the selection.

Sir Edwin Landseer has seven pictures in the gallery—an exhibition in itself. Among others is the well-known composition of ‘Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time’—a picture which attracts only the more attention, because it has become familiar to the public through the medium of engravings. ‘The Combat,’ and ‘The Defeat’ (in which stags are the combatants), are two other characteristic examples of the master’s extraordinary powers in the delineation of animals.

Sir Charles Eastlake sends three of his tenderly elaborated productions—‘The Escape of Francesco Carrara,’ ‘Greek Fugitives from Scio,’ and ‘Christ Blessing Little Children.’

Mr. Mulready is strong in domestic scenes; nor has his exquisite gem called ‘The Bathers’ been forgotten, and for which we are thankful, inasmuch as the French gallery abounds in pictures of undraped figures of a similar description, among which ‘The Bathers,’ in the

matter of fine proportion, roundness, and glow of colour, would have nothing to dread.

Mr. Maclise will not complain of inadequate representation, for, apart from his last great work in the House of Parliament, he could hardly show finer specimens of his powers than those of 'Caxton Exhibiting a Proof-sheet to Edward IV.' and 'The Banquet Scene in Macbeth,' around which crowds linger daily. Mr. Millais is no less fortunate in the fact of the Commissioners having procured the loan of his four pictures—'Autumn Leaves,' 'The Vale of Rest,' the 'Return of the Dove to the Ark,' and 'Apple Blossoms.'

Mr. Leighton among others is happy in adding to the interest of the collection by the presence of his first and very successful work of 'Cimabue's Madonna carried through Florence.' Gorgeous interiors of continental churches and scenes in the East are present, and bear witness to Mr. Roberts's great facility in rendering architectural subjects; while Mr. Stanfield's fine delineations of ocean life abound. Mr. Witherington's modest transcripts of the fields and summer weather have not been overlooked. The elder Linnell exhibits a number of his best landscapes, while the sons of the same artist send some of their more recent productions. Mr. Redgrave has several examples—namely, 'Quentin Matsys, the Blacksmith of Antwerp,' 'The young Lady Bountiful,' and 'Griselde.' Mr. T. Webster, whose pictures lately received a notice at our hands in a review of his works at the Royal Academy, will be found to sustain his reputation at the International Exhibition.

Mr. Cope, whose chief works are to be found on the walls of the Houses of Parliament, has contributed three

compositions with which many will not be unfamiliar. They are, 'The Death of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I.,' 'Lear and Cordelia,' and 'The Sisters.' The stormy coasts and shady lanes, painted by Mr. Lee, attract by their freshness and vigour; and Mr. Creswick's lightly-pencilled foliage reminds the visitor of the pleasant spring-time. Mr. T. Faed's 'Illustrations of Cottage Life' meet with, and will continue to meet with, the appreciation due to their earnest character and skilful execution. Compositions by Mr. Horsley, illustrating passages from Milton and Cervantes, will afford much pleasure. Numerous and serious works by Mr. E. M. Ward will be found in the gallery, having for subjects stirring events in English and French history. Among others, 'The Ante-chamber at Whitehall during the Dying Moments of Charles II.,' 'Charlotte Corday going to Execution,' and 'The Fall of Clarendon.' Mr. Herbert has three characteristic works—two pictures of 'The Magdalen,' and one entitled 'The Outcast of the People.'

There are as many as five specimens of Mr. Frith's popular talent, including the well-known picture of 'Ramsgate Sands,' 'A Scene from Kenilworth,' and 'Merrymaking in the Olden Times.' Nor must we overlook the spirited composition, by Mr. S. F. Watts, of 'Alfred Encouraging the Saxons to Resist the Danish Invader.' The portrait of Alfred Tennyson by the same painter will also prove of interest to many visitors. Mr. Hook's fine sea-piece, entitled 'Luff Boy,' so much admired at the Royal Academy last season, and another called 'The Brook,' will bear further inspection. There are, moreover, sea-pieces by Cook, pretty subject pictures

by Sant, landscapes by Anthony, Spanish scenes by Phillip, and contributions by Hart, Dyce, Holman Hunt, and Egg. Few artists of any distinction are unrepresented. The entire collection of English oil pictures number 790. The gallery is sprinkled with fine specimens of portraiture by living painters of whom we have recently spoken.

In treating of the works of deceased painters the name of our greatest landscape painter was omitted. Of late enough has been said and written about Turner and his works to last for some time to come. It is only necessary for us to say that the best landscapes in the present Exhibition are by that master, and that they have been judiciously selected.

The smaller gallery devoted to paintings in water colour contains more than 600 specimens, affording a complete exposition of the progress of the art, from the productions of Girtin and Sandby, in neutral tint, down to the more refined instances of elaboration and colour of the present time. In this department, at least, English artists will prove a match for their continental rivals.

For those who take an interest in the progress of Architecture there is a large and varied collection of designs on paper, and in the form of models. Rare prints and etchings, by English engravers, are numerous, as are also art-designs for manufactures.

On leaving the English Gallery, after a lengthened stay, we should be wanting in public spirit if we failed to record our impressions of the general state of Art in England as made known by the present gathering of the

chief works of our best masters. James Barry, whose sad career formed the subject of some remarks, wrote an argumentative essay, in which he felt himself called upon to seriously refute numerous continental philosophers and critics, who boldly and persistently maintained that the English had no genius for the cultivation of the fine arts—nay, they even went so far as to aver that all attempts on our part towards the promotion of painting and sculpture would necessarily prove fruitless and only end in despair. Should any doubts of British capacity still linger in the brain of any one foreign critic (and some of them hold strange notions of us even now), surely a sight of our art-productions at the International Exhibition will set those doubts at rest at once and for ever. Yet, because our painters have proceeded so far as to remove all doubt as to their capacity to do great things on canvas and in marble, would it not be a fair question to ask whether they have acquitted themselves in a manner worthy of the country of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton? We have no hesitation in answering the question in the negative. In all that pertains to the higher walks of Art we have much to do ; for lofty themes, where sentiment and passion prevail, we have as yet found no hand to wield the pencil or the chisel triumphantly.

In 1824 Hazlitt thus expressed himself on the subject of French pictures :—‘ There is, however, one exception to the catholic language of painting, which is in French pictures. They are national fixtures, and ought not to be removed from the soil in which they grow.’ The probability is, that had this writer on the fine arts lived a little later he would have found reasons to modify his

extreme opinions. We have seen a gallery in the centre of London set apart for the annual exhibition of the pictures of eminent Frenchmen which are not wanting in fine touches of nature to render them appreciable and instructive everywhere. The present collection at the International Exhibition contains a number of cabinet gems illustrative of the domestic life of our continental neighbours, more especially of domestic life among the poorer classes, which appeal to our sympathies readily and forcibly enough. There are, on the contrary, many paintings in the French Gallery for which we have no particular liking. Lurid fires of past revolutions glare on many a canvas; and there are some illustrations of war and carnage, delineated with a literalness that leaves no single horror untold. One would imagine that the painters of those vast battle-fields were born to wield the sword as well as the pencil, and that they would be no less formidable in a charge than they are in the studio. The ease with which they deal with large bodies of men is absolutely amazing.

In their treatment of domestic subjects, our neighbours certainly lack the buoyant and cheerful spirit which our own painters infuse into themes of a like description. Yet, while in strokes of humour we have the advantage over them, in touches of pathos they carry off the palm. We yield to them superiority in that dramatic power which fills the eye with tears and moves the sensitive heart to make the misfortunes of others its own. When a French painter displaces the side of a cabin to show us its inner life, we behold bare blank walls and anxious faces shrouded in mystery and gloom: the English artist, on the contrary, usually gilds

the rafters of the cottage with sunlight, and paints the rounded cheeks of the cotters in imitation of ripe pears and peaches. The one goes straight to the reality, not caring for the results, caring little whether his pictures prove pleasing and saleable or not : the other has learned not to shock the sensibilities of his patrons, the shrewd picture-dealers, who will intimate that while gentlemen of fortune have no objection to tales of distress in books and sermons, they prefer something different on the walls of their saloons, and that agreeable themes, agreeably coloured, are the best speculations. Thus it is that in England pictures of conventional peasant maidens without shoes and stockings, standing near or seated on stiles, going to fountains for water, crossing pebbly brooks, or gleaning, as the case may be, employ the pencils of many painters. We need hardly observe that the lay figure suggests the form, and that the costumier supplies the clothes of which these specimens of native beauty and talent are composed, and that a more vicious system or study could not be followed. The case has been the reverse with our landscape painters. They have worked well and hard. No artist of any pretensions to celebrity would now think of foisting upon the public imaginary fields, trees, rivers, bridges, and setting suns. Our landscapes are painted to a large extent from nature. The consequence, is that we have arrived at distinction in this delightful branch of painting. If other countries are at all fairly represented in landscape there cannot exist a doubt but that in landscape England is immeasurably superior to them all. But there is also another class of pictures in which the French excel, and in which, as far as the subjects are concerned, we have no desire that our

own artists should attempt to rival them. The themes to which we refer are suggested by antique sculpture and the mythology of the ancients. Some examples of this kind in the French Gallery, indicate that in the treatment of the human form our neighbours are certainly accomplished artists. To their Ledas, nymphs, and Venuses, we could only oppose the works of one living English artist, the sculptor, Gibson, whose Venus, Cupid, and Pandora in the court below, would nobly sustain the comparison.

We have a great admiration for the works of many French painters. The majority of them very properly view their profession in a serious light, like people who have a mission. This feeling may sometimes carry them to extremes, but will, nevertheless, always command our respect. Our own school is in danger of becoming powerless for lack of enthusiasm. For instance, Faed alone of all our painters does full justice to the lowly virtues of the poor and the children of the poor—to those whom Edouard Frère and Duverger understand and love so well, and paint with so much truth and affectionate regard. But if this earnestness is necessary to sustain the painter who contents himself with lowly themes, how much more important must it become when some great story has to be impressed upon the vacant wall? The poor hind, in a mud cabin, surrounded by his hungry, ill-clad offspring, bends his head to invoke a blessing ere he touches the frugal fare; and the painter who fails to note how brightly the eye of that poor man is lit up by the faith that is in him, may paint pots, and pans, and rags, and rafters in vain, for these are only accessories: the gleaming jewel, the soul's light, is in the

eye—it is the poor man's faith that is sacred. There is but one step from the hut of the pious hind to the shrine of the saint, and the pencil of a Delaroche or a Scheffer might not unworthily be employed where Edouard Frère labours with so much zeal: all three painters are equally devout—all three derived their inspiration from the same source.

The 'Sisters of Charity attending a Sick Child,' by Mdme. Henriette Brown, is one of those pictures in the French Gallery which speaks the language of all nations. One Sister holds in her lap a little child with parched lips and writhing with pain (the mother is absent—in her grave it may be); the other and more experienced Sister prepares a soothing medicine for the sufferer. They may be angels in disguise. Their huge snow-white caps tell us they are nuns, but they are heart and soul one with our own Florence Nightingale, who carried relief to the wounded and dying on the battle-fields of the Crimea. Now, a painter does well who, like Henriette Brown, immortalises acts of gentleness and devotion like that of which we are speaking. Nor must we omit to say that the treatment is worthy of the subject. We have seen few pictures more skilfully executed and fewer still more eloquent; its effect is instantaneous, and its influence enduring and complete.

The public taste, no less than the critic's duty, calls for the continuance of notices of the French Gallery—indeed, the whole continental collection proves to have an interest far greater than was anticipated. Art always had the power to attract, but the power of painting over the people was never before tested on so grand a scale as at this International Exhibition; and the remarkable

success of the experiment not only demonstrates the existence of higher qualities in the populace than they were before given credit for, but opens up new speculation as to the future aims of Art in our own land. The continental galleries are always densely packed. This fact proves the existence of something more than mere curiosity in the people. Our visitors have, doubtless, to a large extent, passed beyond the early stage of mere picture-love to that of comparative study of what other nations are doing.

The French, German, and Spanish schools have special attractions for the masses. No doubt this is somewhat due to the fact, which the Exhibition enables the public to discern, that the artists of neighbouring countries possess a peculiar aptitude for telling a story upon canvas. They would seem, moreover, to select dramatic incidents; and if they often border on the horrible, the painter is not discouraged. Indeed, some of the painters approach so near to the verge of the horrible that only great genius saves the subjects from becoming absolutely revolting. Scarcely a picture in the Spanish Gallery but tells of some agonising episode in the past history of that tragical nation and her provinces. We will, however, for the present, resume our studies in the galleries, as indicated, continuing our remarks on the leading pictures of the French masters. R. Fleury introduces us to the presence of Louis XIV. while his Majesty is engaged with one of his Ministers, or possibly some eminent author, who reads from a manuscript, to which the King pays great attention. The secretary sits, pen in hand, a little in the rear. The apartment is lofty and stately; its furniture extremely beautiful. Masses of deep blue

drapery, with fleur-de-lis embossed in gold ; tall portals and richly carved panels, every detail indicating the taste of the period, are characteristics of this picture, and are not without interest. As a work of art it is, in its way, perfect. It is one of the most interesting examples of those pictures called 'conversation pieces' which we remember to have seen. Antoine Emile Plassan's 'Morning Prayer,' in which a young and graceful girl kneels at her bedside, is treated with a tenderness and a delicacy which make ample amends for the painter's intrusion into the sanctuary of innocence and beauty.

Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier, in a small work, called 'The Bravoës,' furnishes one of the most remarkable specimens of high finish in the best sense. With swords drawn, the hireling murderers keep watch at a door from which their intended victim is expected to emerge. They are clad in the picturesque garb of Salvator Rosa's bandits. The instant of death is near. The miscreants hear approaching footsteps, and every muscle and tendon is strained ; nay, the very folds and creases of the clothes worn by the villains seem wrought upon by the excitement of the moment, and prepared to take part in the deadly work.

Meissonier has five pictures in the collection, among them small interiors elaborated to perfection. Delacroix has only one picture in the collection, but that one might have been conceived and painted by Rembrandt himself. We behold a vast hall, dark and gloomy, save where the uncertain light of the blazing torch reveals an assemblage of men armed to the teeth, seated at a table covered with various viands and massive plate.

It might be a feast of a thousand boisterous brigands, met to celebrate a great victory in the castle of some feudal monarch, who has fallen into their murderous hands. In the foreground a mob of men are congregated in fierce commotion. In their midst we distinguish an old man borne to and fro like a wreck by the angry, deafening waves of the sea, and who is being stripped of his habiliments, like a venerable tree buffeted and shorn by the blast. The old man is the Bishop of Liége, a prisoner in his own palace, which has been subdued and taken possession of by William De la Marck, called the 'Wild Boar of Ardennes.' The company assembled is composed chiefly of mercenary soldiers and treacherous citizens of Liége. The time chosen by the painter is just previous to the bishop's murder. The painter, like Sir Walter Scott in his romance of 'Quentin Durward,' vividly brings before the spectator a scene from those dark and detestable times when noblemen and gentlemen, throwing off the restraints of chivalry and honour, became mere plunderers, over whom beauty exercised no softening influence, to whom wisdom and grey hairs were no passport to respect and veneration. As a work of art, this composition of the 'Bishop of Liége' is chiefly remarkable for the invention displayed by the painter in the arrangement of so great a number of figures, which he has broken up into picturesque groups bringing out the tragic incident of the bishop's death without resorting to melodramatic artifice, trusting rather to contrast of character. It may be observed that the colours are laid on with a vigorous pencil, and serve to describe the very stuff and texture of which the wild throng is composed. The colouring partakes of that

brown complexion which, according to the old poet, is indicative of approaching horrors.

The fine large work of Paul Delaroche, of 'Marie Antoinette leaving the Chamber of the National Convention,' is an honour to the French school. The Queen's way lies past a gallery where a number of women are congregated. Old and ugly toothless hags mock and scoff, the young and comely sympathise and shed tears. The fallen Queen proudly and slowly passes on, her fine physiognomy and noble bearing contrasting strongly with the meaner types of humanity around her. Beyond, by the lurid glare of dimly burning lamps, we recognise her ferocious judges. The painter has rendered every other object subservient to the Queen's person and dignity. Eyes of fire and blood glare on her out of the darkness which obscures her step from the noisy chamber of the Convention to her prison in the Temple. She seems to glide rather than to walk, as if borne along by supernatural means—rigid, pallid, unbending, like Majesty transformed to marble. The painter set himself to create sympathy for the fallen Queen, and to invoke indignation on her enemies, the National Assembly, and the rabble audience. To this end he brought all his genius into play. Everything else is sunk in order to secure this main purpose. The Queen's face, in particular, is a wonderful instance of completeness; everywhere carefully and thoughtfully modelled in detail; nothing omitted, yet on the whole nothing to spare. It was thus ancient sculptors lingered over their impressive works, and all who aim at distinction in the delineation of human character and sentiment must follow their example.

Paul Delaroche has six pictures in all, four of which are of an intensely devout character. Among our own painters, Herbert alone has produced works of a religious character which might, in spirit, rank with those of this eminent Frenchman. 'The Virgin in Contemplation before the Crown of Thorns,' 'Good Friday,' and 'The Return from Calvary,' are three small works by Delaroche of a quality so refined, so utterly without spot or blemish, that one might hardly place the point of a needle on any part, and say this particle might admit of reconsideration and improvement. Another inspired work by this master, which startles the crowd and fixes the gaze of the multitude, is that of 'A Martyr in the Reign of Diocletian.' A fisherman and his wife, who arise at early dawn, are attracted by a floating light on the surface of the waters. It is the halo which encircles the head of a fair girl, who floats saint-like down the stream, to which she has been consigned by the persecutors of her faith. The very waves, as if conscious of a precious freight, caress the beautiful form committed to their charge, mingling with the golden tresses and chaste raiment, so that one in imagination might shape those bright sparkling billows into a soft, peaceful couch, and fancy that the maiden was not dead, but only slept, dreaming of innocent joys, were it not for the presence of cruel cords which bind and lacerate her wrists.

Léon François Benouville is a French painter who possesses much of the feeling of that fine old Venetian master, Giorgione. In a picture of 'St. Francesco d'Assisi,' a number of monks are seen standing round a litter, on which reclines the dying Saint. They pause

on the road near the border of a wood to survey the scene before them. A convent to which they direct their steps lies in the peaceful valley, glowing in the calm twilight of the departing day. The stately forms of the monks in their sombre robes rise up darkly against the broad blended bars of silver and golden clouds which stretch along the remote horizon like a wall of light to enclose the longed-for haven of rest. The Saint raises himself up on his couch to contemplate for a moment, and it may be for the last time, the old familiar belfry, court-yard, and cloister. The painter has here described in paint that 'solemn stillness' which on some evenings late in autumn will exercise a peculiarly grave influence on sensitive and reflective natures. It is a mournful elegy or saddening funeral dirge upon canvas ; and we are thus taught how wide is the empire of Art, that the true painter, like the true poet and the musician, can sway the human heart at will. Mr. Millais, in his picture of 'The Vale of Rest,' which is now in the British collection, has done much to assert the sovereignty of the pencil. 'The Vale of Rest' appeared something new and great in the English school, but still our young native painter might learn of Léon François Benouville the difference between an impressive picture and a sensation-creating picture. He might learn from this French master that it is possible to awaken solemn feelings and sublime awe without dealing minutely and literally in graveyard horrors.

In resuming our notices of the French school, we commence with a picture by Charles Louis Muller, entitled 'Mass in the Reign of Terror.' The painter has represented a number of devout Catholics secretly met

to perform the solemn rites of their Church in a carpenter's shop. In the small persecuted congregation, the high and the low, the peer and the peasant, are mingled in common. A youthful widow, with her pale fatherless boy (so made by the Revolution), awaken our tenderest sympathy for their misfortunes.

Among the numerous battle pieces the one by Joseph Louis Hippolyte Bellangé attracts great attention. It may be remarked that great numbers of the visitors, not from indifference, but on the score of economy, are not provided with catalogues. The consequence is that many absurd notions prevail respecting the subjects of the pictures. This is particularly the case with the one to which we now refer, by Bellangé, representing a touching episode in the Crimean campaign. The scene is before Sebastopol, after one of those terrible sorties which left the ground covered with the dying and the dead. French officers are going their rounds, recording the havoc, consigning the wounded to the hospital, and the dead to their graves. In their progress they discover two young officers clasped in each other's arms in death. As they had lived, so they had died united. Such is the subject, yet people without catalogues will perversely jump to the conclusion that one of the forms stretched on the ground is a surgeon with his ear to the other's breast, for the purpose of ascertaining whether life be extinct or not. This misconception spoils all. 'The Two Friends, Sebastopol, 1855,' is the title given in the English catalogue, to which are added two lines of descriptive poetry in French, and which, to those who can read French, make all things intelligible enough. Other battle pieces in the gallery, more espe-

cially those by Adolphe Yvon, representing 'The Gorge of the Malakoff,' 'The Curtain of the Malakoff,' 'The Attack on the Malakoff,' and 'The Battle of Solferino,' will be found extremely interesting, and as works of art, in their way, almost perfect.

'The Boudoir of her Majesty the Empress of the French,' by Joseph Castiglione, is an interior of the most charming description—the very sanctuary of refinement. How it is possible to arrange so many luxuries in one room is the mystery. The Empress reclines in a corner nook formed by a screen and trellis work of living, odorous flowers; another part is rendered agreeable and interesting by the presence of a clump of fine plants from the tropics. So much for nature. It would be quite impossible to undertake an enumeration of the many little elegances and rare objects of taste which everywhere present themselves to view. The whole is very attractive, and, doubtless, a faithful picture of this popular Empress in her retirement. Winterhalter's life-size, and, we might add, life-like portrait of the same graceful personage, also hangs near at hand. A little way hence will likewise be found a whole-length portrait of the French Emperor, Napoleon III., by Jean Hippolyte Flandrin, which is admirably finished, and we should imagine very like what his Majesty appears at the present time. Nor must we overlook the forcible, animated portrait of H. I. H. Prince Jerome Napoleon, also painted by Flandrin, on the opposite side of the gallery.

No collection of French pictures would be complete without a sprinkling of undraped examples of human gracefulness and beauty. Jean Auguste Dominique

Ingres might feel proud of having produced upon canvas a form sufficiently attractive to rival in popularity that triumph of the chisel, the 'Greek Slave,' which graced the Exhibition of 1851. 'The Spring,' by Ingres, is personified by a young girl of matchless symmetry, who, standing within a niche formed by a rocky cavern, holds on her shoulder an earthen vase, from whence descends a stream of crystal water. Never, not even in the imagination of the classic poets, had streamlet or river a source more poetical than the one now derived from the accomplished pencil of our French master. The maiden is as modest as she is beautiful. But while the limbs are moulded with an elegance and fair proportion that might almost compare with Raphael's Graces themselves, yet they lack the glowing vitality of nature. The colouring of the picture is heavy and opaque.

A composition, by Paul Jacques Aimé Baudry, entitled 'Fortune and the Little Child,' is of a type more voluptuous than the 'Spring.' Fortune in her course lights on a little boy, a roguish elf with rounded cheeks, and sits down on a well side to caress the urchin, with whose winning ways she has suddenly become enamoured. It is clear that the little fellow's lot will be a pleasant one. He will not have to implore—he will command. Already we see waywardness written on his brow, mingling with laughing lines of light. Fortune is the slave and not the mistress. Her long slender fingers toy with his chestnut locks, and form dimples in his peach-like cheeks, which she is never tired of kissing. 'Ask what thou wilt,' she seems to say, 'nothing shall be denied thee!' Meanwhile the wheel rests, the world waits and others pine, in order that the lightest wish of Fortune's pet may be

anticipated. This picture is ingenious and charming, well composed, boldly relieved, and sweetly coloured.

Not equal in colour but even more beautiful in conception is a smaller work by Jean Louis Hamon, called 'Our Sister is not at Home!' The painter, with singular felicity, pictures to us a pleasant incident of love-making in the 'rural districts' of ancient Greece. A farmer's son of some seventeen years old, with a frame promising a second Hercules, is seen entering the outer enclosure of a cottage, carrying in one hand a rare plant, in the other two turtle-doves in a cage. These pretty trifles are intended, as everyone plainly discovers, for the maiden with blue eyes, graceful, slender, and coy as becomes her fifteenth birthday, and who, instead of meeting her swain with open arms, bashfully steals behind her little brother and sister who stop the way, and exclaim with artless childish glee, 'Our sister is not at home!' No picture in the gallery is more readily understood, appreciated, and enjoyed than this pretty thing by Jean Louis Hamon, and if we might come to envy her Majesty the Empress of the French the possession of any one of her many fine pictures, we should be certainly inclined to select the one entitled 'Our Sister is not at Home!'

The picture we shall next mention is entitled 'A Cottage Interior—Supper Time,' by Edouard Frère. This painter must have passed his life among children. We seldom get a sight of father and mother. It is always some wonderful neat, clever, managing elder sister, herself a child, who reigns supreme in Frère's cottage homes. The way in which this elder sister handles a baby is truly marvellous; still more marvellous is the order which she invariably preserves among her little

brothers. It is not in the power of this interesting creature to find her numerous charge in shoe leather, but she evidently hits their taste to a nicety in the matter of porridge. She cannot in the nature of things bedeck her own pretty person with fine clothes, but she can and does plait her soft brown hair in a manner which might become a princess. The furniture is altogether inadequate to the household, yet they all get something to sit upon. The table is always inviting, because the platters and basins are clean and bright. The most perfect harmony prevails, for this sister presides over all with so much grace that it were impossible to rebel against her authority. Since no sign of grief prevails, we can hardly imagine that aught of evil has befallen the parents of this happy family ; the probability is that father and mother are hard-working people and much from home, and the youngsters would fare badly but for sister Janet, who is their loving guardian angel, ever present, by day or by night, listening to their prattle, settling all their little disputes. Are they sick, she is at their bedside ? are they hale and abroad, she has her eyes upon them to see that they meet with no harm. She bears her heavy responsibility without effort, and never utters a complaint all the year round. It is Janet here, and Janet there, and Janet everywhere, and yet Janet is never out of the way. We should have no hesitation in walking ten miles to see the little girl with the plaited brown hair who plays elder sister in Edouard Frère's 'Rustic Home.' She has beaten the philosophers, for, without resources, she is herself happy, makes others happy, and keeps them so.

Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian painters have done

just what we could have desired them to do : they have favoured us with pictures illustrative of their home life and popular manners and customs ; so that a visit to their gallery is almost as good as a journey through their several States. Without the danger which appears to be imminent, we may almost seem to take part in their terrible onslaughts on savage bears in dark pine-woods, and without subjecting ourselves to a diet of blubber and dried fish we may peep into the Laplander's hut. Gude sends us transcripts of the mountains, forests, and waterfalls of Norway ; and Tideman reveals to us the religious aspect of the Norwegian people. We see how they live in joy and sorrow, where they live, how they die, and in what manner they are buried. We look into their schools and churches, we see the pious at prayer, we witness their marriage ceremonies, and processions grave and gay. In addition, we have elaborate imitations of the fruit and flowers which bless their brief summers, and of the birds, beasts, and fishes which inhabit their forests, rivers, and seas. We have marked a few of these vigorous pictures which struck us as particularly characteristic of northern genius.

Eduard Bergh, the Swede, exhibits a large picture of 'An Old Mill,' with the foaming torrent and mountains beyond. The mill, which is apparently of great strength, is placed on the very verge of a chasm, where the waters come tumbling down—boiling, and foaming, and spending their fury on the shelving rocks below.

'The Fisherman's Hut,' in Lapland, by Johan Frederick Höckert, is perhaps the finest work in the three schools. The Laps make nursing a very easy matter. The little chubby baby is always slung up to a

rafter, lashed in a hammock along with the fish and skins of beasts and birds, and thus becomes well smoked and dried in early years; meanwhile the picturesquely clad mother, with her cap of red cloth and jewels and modest simple face, sits at the fire with her dingy husband, who mends his net and smokes his pipe, and converses in peace, while young hopeful is being duly seasoned. A cord communicates with the suspended infant, which enables the fond parent to impart a gentle undulating movement to the cradle, which is, no doubt, very agreeable to the occupant thereof. This picture is done in a masterly manner throughout. The colouring, in particular, is deep, rich, and glowing. The Laplander, who seems to enjoy his pipe and prepare his net with so much composure at home, is wondrous brave, and capable of great exertion when abroad. The wolf, the bear, and the seal are his lawful spoils.

Alfred Wahlberg's picture of a 'Bear Hunt' (the figures being inserted by J. W. Wallander) enables us to perceive that hunting the bear in Sweden is no light pastime. A slip on the frozen ground is but a prelude to a shroud of snow and a frozen grave. Armed with axe, and spear, and accompanied by dogs, these hardy men are seen in deadly combat with two huge monsters. Already one poor Lap lies sprawling, crushed and bleeding, in the drift; while, nothing daunted, his companions approach the enemy, who stands on his hind legs erect and defiant as becomes the grizzly monarch of those vast and awful ice-bound solitudes, when fighting for life and empire.

B. Nordenberg has a picture representing the 'Collection of Tithes in Scania.' The people of Scania do

not select the leanest calf and the most venerable rooster for their minister. They evidently pay their tithes with little or no reluctance. In the picture before us their chief spiritual adviser, a rosy-faced, middle-aged gentleman, sits with his curate in the hall of the parsonage-house smoking a large meerschaum pipe with great contentment, as he receives one by one his numerous parishioners, who arrive heavily laden with all manner of good things. This is a true picture to the life doubtless. The faces are very expressive, particularly those of the minister's household.

Miss Amalia Lindergren's 'Evening in a Dalecarlian Cottage' gives us a vivid picture of the agreeable manner in which they sometimes, and perhaps frequently, conclude the day in Dalecarlia. A peasant amateur musician, having cleared sufficient space in the cottage, indulges his rosy-faced offspring with a dance, which is both graceful and spirited, the figure bearing a strong resemblance to those in use among little children we have seen sculptured on antique vases. The happy mother sits by the fire nursing her laughing babe, and with no small pride in her eye surveys the happy group whirling round and round to the merry notes of her husband's fiddle. We hope that Dalecarlia has many such evening parties, and we could wish the same for our own rural homes. Miss Lindergren is an exquisite colourist, and she imparts wonderful relief to her forms—to say nothing of the almost classical style of her compositions. After contemplating her charming picture, we could not help thinking that men would be much happier than at present if, in early life, they all learned to dance and play the fiddle, so that in after time they

might all fiddle and dance to their heart's content within the circle of their own happy families, like the peasants of Dalecarlia.

Before parting with the Swedish masters, we cannot refrain from calling attention to the pleasant picture by Höckert, also representing a scene in Dalecarlia. On this occasion the villagers are assembled in a meadow making hay. The babies are as usual hung up on pegs out of harm's way ; while, clothed in bright festive garments, the fathers and mothers proceed with their labours in the bright warm sun. The day is warm but not sultry, and the process of tedding grass in Dalecarlia seems a beautiful occupation, a pleasure rather than a toil.

The principal place in the Danish division of the Gallery is occupied by the portrait of 'His Majesty King Frederick VII.' painted by J. W. Gertner, while a little above is the painter's portrait of the celebrated sculptor, Thorwaldsen. As pictures, these examples of portraiture are slightly hard and laboured, but full of character and expression. In this department will be found two very interesting interiors. One, 'A Room in the Palace of Rosenborg'; the other, 'Christian IV.'s Study in the Palace of Rosenborg': being two of the most elaborate instances of costly and profuse architectural ornamentation we remember to have seen. In the ceiling of these apartments are gorgeous paintings, and the marble floors are tessellated and polished like mirrors. The tables are also of polished marble, and the chimney pieces of the same material, massive and grand, relieved by figures in silver and bronze. The pillars which support the roof are of oak, elaborately carved, the chairs and cabinets

are of oak and ebony, furnished with coverings of rich velvet, in various patterns and colours. Added to these, are assembled various cavaliers and ladies in bright and picturesque costumes; the whole forming magnificent pictures, bearing evidence alike to the luxury and fine taste of the Royal line of Denmark.

The Danes also send a few good landscapes. One in particular, by Skovgaard, would strike the spectator as a faithful representation of a beech-wood on the margin of a transparent lake. The painter has happily introduced a farmer's wife in charge of some cows in the foreground, which is luxuriant with wild roses and various other blossoming plants and weeds. The same painter has also 'A Scene in Jagersborg Deer Park. Evening. August.' We like this method of stating the particular month when the landscape was painted. These landscapes are so truthful that one is enabled to discover the time of the year, and almost the hour of the day, they are meant to represent.

The Danish artists paint fruit to perfection. One example, entitled 'Field and Garden Fruit under a Tree,' by W. Hanmer, from the Royal Gallery of Copenhagen, is an instance of perfection in imitation. In all that pertains to their own lands we repeat that these Norwegians, Swedish, and Danish painters, greatly instruct and charm the English visitor. Some of the Northern painters leave their native mountains and valleys for the sunnier lands of France and Italy, where they become ardent students in the schools of eminent masters, and strive to possess themselves of the taste and feeling of the ancients, and end in becoming pedantic. For some reason or other, we prefer their pictures of home—where

the old people are honoured like the patriarchs of yore ; where blonde beauties in gay clothes are betrothed and given away in marriage, with much ceremony and merry-making, to honest worthy youths, who have industry to support their wives, and courage to defend them from danger. In the life of the people among whom they dwell those Northern painters will ever find an unfailing source of inspiration and themes interesting to the far-off stranger, no less than to their own countrymen and women, because painting speaks in a language which is common to all mankind, and because works which treat of home, and sentiment, and passion, appeal, and not in vain, to the common human heart.

‘ Rapine, Plunder, and Conflagration ’ is the title given to a small picture in the Belgian gallery, by J. Lies. The scene is laid in the Netherlands, on the outskirts of an ancient Burgh. The conquerors, a band of mercenary soldiers, who have set fire to the houses and churches, are retiring in the darkness of the night with their prisoners and spoils. Some are laden with the relics of the altar and the rich vestments of the priests ; others have contented themselves with plundering the hen-roost and wine cellar. As they wind their disorderly way up the hill from which we view the burning city, reflecting its lurid horrors in the dark waters beneath, we contemplate the nearer groups. A delicate lady of rank, in white satin robes, has fallen to the lot of a stalwart, callous, coarse ruffian, who loses not the opportunity to insult the victim of his fury in the hearing of her powerless husband. Onward they go, pell mell ; youth and old age, fair women, noble youths, venerable citizens, bound and driven like beasts of burden over the broken

ground, and through dismal swamps, mingling their sighs with the vile gibes and mocking laughter of their captors. Such is war, rapine, and conflagration as rendered, with uncommon force, by the Belgian painter, and, we fear, with too much truth.

In the Belgian gallery, the works of H. Leys also awaken much interest. The largest example, representing 'The Institution of the Golden Fleece in 1429,' contains a great number of figures habited in the costumes of the period. This picture might at first sight be mistaken for an early Flemish production, so strictly in every sense has the painter reproduced the ugliness, austere manners, and quaint garb to be seen in pictures by John Van Eyck and his contemporaries. So again in the work entitled 'Margaret of Austria receiving the Oaths of the Archers of Antwerp.' The very paving stones in the court-yard tell of bygone times, as in other pictures by the master do the narrow streets, gloomy gateways, corridors and cloisters. We can understand how the painter got at the true character of the people, for many of them are preserved with more than photographic fidelity on the old panels of Flemish painters of celebrity, while the garments and jewellery, books and furniture, are carefully conserved in the museums and libraries of the curious and learned in such rare objects. Moreover, the true Fleming of to-day is but little different from the old race. So far all seems clear sailing for the artist; but Leys does not merely people the streets, churches, and cloisters of his country; he restores to us the old and robust energy and noble bearing of his forefathers: as witness his fine historical picture of the 'Publication of the Edict of Charles V. in 1550,

introducing the Inquisition into the Netherlands.' Do they not receive the insult like men and women who are determined to be free? Mark their stern and thoughtful brows! Fain, when the gaudy trumpeter proclaims silence, for the value of a stiver would they beat the trumpet about the coxcomb's head and trample his master's edict in the mire. We have said that in his largest work Leys has excelled in ugliness, but this is not always his rule. In this picture, in which the herald of Charles V. appears with his hateful message, beautiful women mingle with the throng, and help by their presence to mitigate the severe aspect of the sturdy Burghers. In a picture representing 'Young Luther singing Hymns in the Streets of Eisenach,' there is a most sweet girl seated near the cloister intently listening to the strains of the chorister boys.

Leys' pictures may be considered as the most literally truthful examples of pictorial art produced in modern times; and yet with all their literalness they want not in fancy. His groups are not composed of forms dim and shadowy, pitiful ghosts of departed humanity; on the contrary, they appear before us bravely, as in the flesh, with fire in their eyes and determination written on their honest faces. They come not as a tawdry pageant, to amuse like mummers on a winter's night, but rather like a living admonition to the present generation of men and women; and it is not impossible but that those citizens and staid wives and daughters of the old Netherlands might have much to say for themselves, and on the present state of things, not undeserving of respectful attention. Anyhow, we heartily thank H. Leys for the pleasure and instruction afforded us in his

bright, and gloomy, and life-like portraiture of Gothic times and Gothic manners.

Those who desire to contemplate a work distinguished by every fine quality of painting will be gratified by a sight of M. Gaillait's picture, entitled 'Delilah.' The beautiful but treacherous woman has given up Samson for a sum of gold, which lies at her feet. Samson, bound, is borne off by the Philistines, and his betrayer is left alone to her remorse and shame. She listens to the tramp of the retreating captors, whose shouts as they triumph over the hero she has given into their hands are as daggers to her heart. With so much intensity are these feelings expressed that we expect no less than to see the woman start up in frenzy or dash herself on the ground in the very agony of overwhelming confusion. And though this woman-Judas is beautiful to behold, and by turns as gentle as the fawn, yet she can be furious as the panther, and by-and-by, when she can no longer ensnare and enslave, she will lose all her softness, and her dark eyes will only burn with rage and hate. Such is the being our artist has painted for Delilah.

M. Gaillait's picture dramas, of which the collection contains eight, are marked with a vigour and force which call to mind passages from our own early tragic writers : as witness his picture of 'The Last Honours paid to Counts Egmont and Horn.' The ghastly lineaments of the two counts, as rendered by M. Gaillait, will not easily become effaced from the memories of the thousands who behold them lying in state, surrounded by the archers of Brussels. With face of bronze the relentless Duke of Alba stands near the victims of his vengeance, while a priest prepares to light the tapers ; meanwhile over the

chamber the pale marble hue of death prevails, contrasting with the ruddy glow of life and manly vigour in the old and faithful city archer guards. And there is the delicate lawn winding-sheet, with its violet-tinted folds and indentations spotted with blood, and there is the shadowy pall with which they would fain conceal the source of those purple and crimson streams from the eyes of the mute tearful gazers assembled round the bier. The painter had a stern subject to deal with, and he did not shrink from the task. One picture alone of all the pictures that we can call to mind, or rather of those we cannot forget, has greater power, and that one is the 'Lecture on Anatomy,' by Rembrandt, at the Hague. In the contrast between the living and the dead, in the corpse and in the surgeons who make it the subject of their studies, the Dutch artist has made one of the most impressive pictures of mortal man in the world.

Rembrandt had not the advantage of a noble theme, such as that chosen by M. Gaillait ; but Rembrandt's corpse, though livid and shrunken, is still fascinating. As we draw near unto it, we discern that death has not wholly effaced those signs of character which, day by day, sentiment and passion had engraven upon the man's outward form and crust. The blood has ceased to course through vein and artery, the fire has burnt out, but even yet may be traced on the folds and in the creases of that shrunken shape of white and grey the story of a life. The corpse thinks all over. The man is blanched, and mute, and fixed, and still, laid bare as an eloquent scroll spread open to the living eye. M. Gaillait has painted a picture which it is impossible to pass, but

Rembrandt painted a picture it is almost impossible to leave. Gaillait depicts death as it haunts the slumbers of the sick and morbid in chambers of horror, broad, massive, ghastly, and repugnant, but the mighty limner of the Rhine, like an affectionate friend, and with an instinctive refinement, drops a soft, light, delicate veil over the coarse and staring lineaments of mortality, and soothes and caresses the mind of the spectator into a state of tranquillity, so that we contemplate and are not startled. The worst is before us, our sympathy is awakened, but we feel no dread.

Some writers of handbooks to picture galleries have lately been laying down laws for their own guidance, which, being faithfully followed, would render art criticisms very harmless and useless, and at the same time very tiresome. It is certain that one ought to exercise infinite caution in dealing with the reputation of the painters and sculptors who labour to adorn the walls of our galleries. But, while condemning precipitation of judgment, we should be sorry to subscribe to the dictum of those who would reduce the critic to a mere cipher. We trust that we are not so blind but that we can detect an inequality in the human form, whether on canvas or in stone, and, detecting it, that criticism would be false which did not indicate it. The meanest capacity will detect disproportion in the living man, and why may the critic not do the same with the counterfeit in paint? One of the lecturers of the Royal Academy (Fuseli, we believe), has referred to the fact that the very porters in the street will characterise each other with aptness enough, in terms such as 'Hawknosed,' 'Knock-kneed'—terms by no means flattering, but no less true. If the

unlearned can venture thus successfully to pronounce judgment on the unavoidable shortcomings of their fellows, surely a critic may be excused pointing out similar infirmities in pictures and statues set up in high places for the special enlightenment of the public. And what is obvious in respect to the mere just division of parts in the human frame is no less clear in respect to passion and sentiment as expressed in face and form by manifold variations and play of muscle. The lights and shades of human passion and sentiment are so clearly articulated on the countenance, that the very infant at the breast is not altogether ignorant of the import of a smile or a frown.

Then we come to speak of colour. All the world has agreed that Titian and Rubens are good colourists, and that Poussin and Le Brun are the reverse. The reason why the preference is awarded to the Fleming and the Venetian is not difficult to decide. The colours of Titian and Rubens are in strict harmony with Nature, while those of Le Brun and Poussin are not. To confine ourselves to the painting of flesh. We know that the tender hue of the rose makes a nearer approach to the tints on the cheeks of a beautiful woman than a dull, hot, staring red brick. Notwithstanding this evident fact, Poussin and Le Brun gave the preference to the brick, so that the pervading colour of their pictures is neither tender nor beautiful, but, on the contrary, vulgar and coarse. Time has done something to mitigate the vulgarity of the pictures of these two painters ; but the original defects will always be apparent while a grain of the colour remains. Another instance of brick-red flesh will be found on the grand staircase at Hampton

Court Palace, in the allegorical compositions of Verrio and Laguerre.

If memory does not deceive us Sir Joshua Reynolds recommends the young painter, when painting flesh, to think of pearls and ripe peaches. The poet is under the necessity of making comparisons in order to convey his precious meaning truly and fully to the reader. It was a happy thought of Sir John Suckling to compare the bride's cheeks to the white and red of the daisy, and to those intense streaks of carmine on the sunny side of a Catherine pear. The lips of Cupid are compared by John Lyly to coral, his cheeks to a rose. The Earl of Stirling blends coral, roses, and snow, in order to give a just idea of his mistress's complexion. Richard Alison confines himself to roses, white lilies, orient pearls, and snow. 'Claret and cream commingled' is suggested to Robert Herrick when he contemplates returning health to Julia's cheek and her lips to 'beams of coral.' All those poets who made human beauty the subject of their songs seem to have agreed as to the colour of flesh and blood. The great painters would have dissolved pearls, distilled roses, crushed lilies, and ground coral, in order to realise upon canvas their high appreciation of human loveliness. Guido said that Rubens might have mixed his colours with blood.

Vulgarity in colours may be brought about by an over-earnest desire to reach the force and vivacity of nature. Little venture, and you will have little influence. Opposing colours must be placed side by side—the warm and the cool be mingled together in peace. The loudest music must not degenerate into noise, nor the brightest colours be permitted to stare. The sweetest modulations

and most delicate transitions are employed alike by the great composer and the great painter, not only in order that the eye and the ear may escape outrage, but also in order that each may receive exquisite delight. A colour is capable of as many variations as a sound. It is in colour that the unlearned are most apt to be misled. We have shown that the unlearned are capable of discerning inequalities, disproportions in form. The faculty of colour is not perhaps so common, but the capacity exists, and may be cultivated by training, by example, and by judicious public criticism. At all events, it is for the public critic to point out what is symmetrical in form and harmonious in colour.

Time was that painters were accustomed to place the figures of their compositions all on a row, and put explanatory labels in their mouths; but attempts are now made, and with great success, to arrange groups in natural order, and to make the figures say what they ought to say by unmistakable look and gesture. The old Dutch and Venetian painters almost invariably made up backgrounds for their Scripture pieces from the contemporary streets and squares in their native cities, and outraged propriety in many ways, putting time and place out of all consideration. Such improprieties were excusable in a period of general ignorance. Similar anachronisms would not be tolerated now. No amount of genius would or ought now to exempt a painter from censure who would venture to outrage the visitors of the Royal Academy by anachronisms so gross as those perpetrated by Bassano and Veronese, and even by Titian himself.

So of the human form. The bones, muscles, flesh,

veins, and integuments require much study. The consummate painter, as Leonardo da Vinci observes, does not make the trunk of a man resemble a 'bag of nuts,' nor the human hand like a 'bunch of radishes.' Some living painters, who with much complacency attempt to delineate the human form, are guilty of errors of which the critic is bound to take notice. To detect beauties that pass unobserved by the common eye is no doubt the most gracious office of criticism, yet it is no less a salutary function to guard against the worship of faults. We have to insist on the neglected question of the truth of colour, and enforce the possibility of the popular cultivation of a taste for colour. To some of the continental pictures in the International Exhibition we shall next proceed to notice the principles we have indicated will have many applications. For instance, the pictures from Prussia, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Hesse, Saxony, and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, united under the head of Germany, will, we believe, be found by candid critics to be almost destitute of examples of fine colouring.

It was found impossible to adequately represent German art in the International Exhibition, for the simple reason that the more important pictures of that school are painted directly upon walls. Very few of those present are by the chief painters. With this very necessary remark we proceed to notice a few of the more interesting examples in the principal gallery. Foremost in importance, and of huge dimensions, is a picture of 'Nero after the Burning of Rome,' painted by Carl Piloty, of Bavaria. Dressed as a woman, and crowned with roses, the Emperor, accompanied by his guards and

slaves, goes in mock procession to witness and enjoy the havoc he has made. Everywhere the once beautiful city presents a picture of desolation. The stones, still bearing the impress of genius in mutilated crumbling examples of ornamentation and architectural beauty, lie in confused heaps among smouldering beams and rafters. The principal group consists of some Christians tied to a stake. Father, mother, and little daughter are discovered dead among the ruins. They have perished of suffocation or starvation. Beyond, another party of Christians, victims of persecution, lie strewn here and there among the *débris*, while their children wander frantically about. This work creates a sensation among the visitors only second in intensity to the influence exercised by the painting of the 'Counts Egmont and Horn,' in the Belgian Gallery. Viewed as a whole, this picture by Piloty is deserving of great commendation. Only great enthusiasm could have sustained the artist in an undertaking so vast and so imposing. It may be objected that as a composition no very great genius has been displayed : that the colouring is opaque and strong, and altogether wanting in sweetness, but it is impossible to deny to the work a certain force, directness of purpose, power and majesty, qualities to which few productions in the collection can lay claim.

Another large composition, by Theodore Schløepcke, of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, represents 'The Death of Niclot, King of the Obotrites.' This work is cold in tone and feebly pencilled, without variety of colour, and deficient in general force, but at the same time the artist has evinced great knowledge of the structure of the horse. 'The Raising of Jairus' Daughter,' by the

Prussian painter, Gustav Richter, is a large, coarse, unimaginative work, redeemed only by one figure, that of the daughter, a figure in every way contrasting with the others by its exceeding delicacy. A 'Deposition from the Cross,' by E. Jacobs, of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, is to our mind conventional and affected: faults rendered the more evident and objectionable by reason of the large dimensions of the canvas which they are made to cover. Julius Schrader's 'Lady Macbeth Walking in her Sleep' is possibly the great failure of the collection. It would have been agreeable to ourselves to have avoided some of the German pictures, this one of 'Lady Macbeth' more especially, but there was no getting out of its way. We doubt not but that the author of this production is a capable painter. Lady Macbeth appears very much like a pictorial blunder of a clever man, who has in this instance taken the unfortunate one step from the sublime.

We observe that the bulk of the German collection is made up by contributions direct from the artists themselves, and in all probability the pictures thus set before us, if the actual property of German collectors and connoisseurs, are not much valued by their respective owners. At all events, we are far from being flattered by the choice which the committee have made for us. The authors of the works no doubt conceived a good opinion of their efforts, and so far we have nothing to urge against the painters; but those entrusted with the task of selection might surely have sent better examples of native genius than those which now represent the German School at the International Exhibition.

'The Last Remnant of a Protestant Community in

the Religious Wars of the 17th Century,' by August Kreling, of Bavaria, depicts a party of nobles with their families assembled round the altar of a Protestant church, where women and children have vainly sought protection within the sanctuary, for the soldiers of the cross beat down the doors, and in spite of a brave resistance enter the chancel. There is no longer any hope. The priest has just time to give the sacrament to a wounded gentleman in the presence of his despairing wife and children. The painter has displayed dramatic power in the disposition of the several groups. The soldier coming leisurely towards the altar after having fired his last shot, and having fully decided that he has no longer anything to detain him in the world, is an instance of good painting. Less of that frenzy of despair exhibited by the principal figures would better have declared the moral of the incident, but would at the same time have ignored the more striking and terrible manifestations of human passion to which the painter has given full licence.

'Luther entering Worms, April 16, 1521,' is a composition of numerous figures, by Frederic Martersteig, of the Grand-Duchy of Saxony. In the matter of colour this is one of the most unpleasant pictures possible to conceive. Many of the faces wear an appropriate expression, while some border upon caricature. The Reformer and his friends form the principal group. Luther himself has performed the journey in a very humble carriage of wicker-work. His arrival creates no small curiosity among the ruling powers. His dauntless look, the calm bearing of his friends, and the sympathy of many in the throng might, however,

have been sufficient to create no inconsiderable dread in the hearts of the priests and nobles who look down from casement and balcony on that dust-stained *cortège* in the courtyard of Worms on April 16, 1521.

'The Birthday Fête of a Country Parson' is the title of an agreeable and very popular picture by J. Grund, of Baden. The door of the *curé's* house is beset betimes in the morning by village children, who come with birthday offerings, which include many kinds of provender, varying in quantity and kind according to the means of the contributors. Those who come with much expect much notice, and step boldly forward, while those who have little to give manage their mission unobtrusively. Some of the leaner boys appear only with scrolls of paper in their hands, which, we suppose, are complimentary odes written for the occasion. The *curé*, with his ruby, glistening face, comes forth smiling into the porch to receive the gifts of his parishioners, and first and foremost he pays his respects to a tiny little maiden with a large nosegay. The poets will probably come in at the termination of the ceremony. The confident behaviour of a roughish lad with a thumping goose is in marked contrast to a poor lad with a few cucumbers. The work is only marred by the usual yellowish, greenish glaze, so common to the school to which it belongs.

The two children, in the picture by Frederic Boser, of Prussia, called 'The Poor-Box,' is agreeable alike in colour and expression.

'The Emigrants' Farewell,' by the Prussian painter, Carl Hübner, abounds in beautiful feeling. The poor family assembled round the old churchyard awaken

interest and sympathy. The crumbling stones and ruined condition of the very burial ground, to say nothing of the woe-begone aspect of the villagers themselves, say, and that only too plainly, that it is time to be gone. The curse of poverty is on the place. We have nothing to urge against this picture, saving that it has been more than half spoiled by the yellow varnish put upon it, which is alike opposed to the freshness and variety of nature.

‘The Funeral in the Forest,’ by Ludwig Knaus, of Prussia, is a picture possessing all the fine qualities of ‘The Emigrants’ Farewell,’ together with the same yellowish opaque quality of colour which, like a blight, seems to infect more than half the German Gallery. By mere chance a gendarme, having charge of a prisoner, has drawn up on the side of a lane, dark with overhanging trees. The stern minister of justice removes his meerschaum from his mouth, and the poor criminal, with gyves upon his wrists, manages to take off his hat as the solemn pageant approaches. The coffin and the followers are shrouded in the forest gloom, but, emerging from the darkness, are chorister boys, bearing symbols and chanting hymns, and a fair girl, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, walks in their midst like a spirit of light to guide the steps of the grief-stricken mourners. It has been said the painter intended the funeral to be that of the criminal’s parent, whose grey hairs his crimes have brought down with sorrow to the grave. There are two ways—one to the prison, the other to the churchyard; and haply the man with the hard heart, who has had the grace to cease smoking while the procession passes, will permit his prisoner to follow in the wake of

that mournful procession. The hindrance would be little, while the good results of a little kindness shown the conscience-stricken man in such a moment might be infinite.

Holland contributes some cabinet pictures of good quality, not indeed to compare with the works of the great old masters of the Dutch school in brilliancy of execution, but showing considerable advance in point of morality. The interiors of David Bles, in the present collection, are of a character infinitely more to the honour of the nationality which they represent at the International Exhibition than any works of the old Dutch painters could have been. The ladies in the pictures of Mieris and Netscher, in white satin robes, are beautiful to behold ; but theirs is not the beauty of the soul. The people who figure on the panels of Brouwer, Teniers, Ostade, and Jan Steen, are all coarse and vulgar. We make it no objection to those painters of two hundred years back that they happened to live in a period when people were not so generally refined and intellectually disposed as at present, or that they made feasting, merry-makings, and brawls themes for their pencils. It was their misfortune to live at a time when the manners and customs of society were unworthy of their great talents. The evil is that now, having discovered themes which deserve to be well painted and immortalised, no great limner is forthcoming to take advantage of the discovery ; so that the more delicate, the chaster beauties of modern home life and manners fail to meet justice at the painter's hands.

One almost regrets that those old masters should have wasted their time on themes so contemptible.

Adrian Ostade flooded his very barns and roadside inns with the star-shining twilight of the heavens ; Teniers filled the pothouse of the boor with light serene and pure as the diamond's blaze ; Albert Cuyp made his rivers and woods rich in hues of amber, saffron, silver, and gold ; and even the sunless daylight of those early painters seems to wear a tranquillity as far removed from cold and garish poverty as the mild radiance of the costly pearl. The absence of this fine feeling for colour is painfully apparent in the modern Dutch school, although in a far less degree than in the German pictures on the other side of the gallery. Redeeming features, as we have said, abound in the modern Dutch works ; but we may be permitted to mourn for the loss of those gem-like qualities which distinguish the older productions of Holland, and which justly render them still the pride of almost every palace in Europe.

One picture in the present collection would have done honour to the best old Dutch master who ever lived. We allude to the one entitled 'The Shipwrecked,' by Jacob Israëls. With all their wealth of genius those old masters of whom we are speaking commonly failed to reach the human heart in the way Jacob Israëls has done. The earlier efforts of the school lack that persuasive power which speaks from the canvas to the gazer even as an eloquent discourse. They delight, astonish, and amuse, but they do not make their admirers better ; they confer happiness, but they do not instil virtue. The tongue, the pen, and the pencil are well employed when they plead for the poor and awaken universal sympathy for their misfortunes, as Israëls has done in his painted tragedy in humble life. A fisher-

man's bark, stripped of every vestige of sail, mast broken, and without rudder, is fast drifting towards the fatal shore where its owner has already arrived a corpse. Hardy comrades carry home the body, the widows and orphans lead the way to the cottage up among the rocks. There, in that out-of-the-way spot, where in sad music the waves for ever surge along the shore, who will hear of the widow's and orphan's grief? Haply some tender-hearted bard will master their sad story, and repeat it to the listening sympathising world, or possibly some gifted painter will stand the orphan's and the widow's friend; and such, indeed, is the author of the picture called 'The Shipwrecked,' before which crowds daily linger in the Dutch gallery of the International Exhibition.

Again, who does not feel for 'The Sand Merchant of Brussels,' whose misfortunes are so graphically put upon canvas by H. Romer? The old man's best and almost only friend in the world, the huge mastiff, who for so many years has drawn the sand-cart through the streets of Brussels, has just fallen dead in harness by the way. The merchant is utterly undone. One sees this at a glance. Had the noble brute only lasted out another season matters might not have been so bad, for then a promising pup forming part of the group might have become sufficiently well knit about the joints to have filled up the blank occasioned by the old dog's retirement. As it is, the merchant's occupation is clearly gone, and the housewives of Brussels must look elsewhere for their sand—that is, unless some good citizen should chance to buy the poor man another dog, and which, after witnessing his distress or contemplating

Romer's touching picture, would almost follow as a matter of course. Again, hard must be the heart which could survey unmoved the picture of desolation, painted by G. H. L. De Haas, entitled 'After the Inundation.' One of those floods which not unfrequently carry misery and despair into the villages and homesteads of North Holland is here depicted in all its horrors. In the midst of the wild waste of waters, carcasses of horses and a few howling dogs have been left high and dry on a narrow strip of land, cut off from all the world. Peering out of the waves, stunted willows raise their drooping heads, as if in mockery to mark the site of the smiling pastoral meadows of yesterday.

Turning from scenes of misfortune to others calculated to awaken only pleasure, we find one, by A. Mollinger, called 'A Landscape after a Shower.' The scene is on the banks of a broad, flat, shallow river. The eye looks over a level, treeless, shrubless, tract of rich pasture land, everywhere dotted with cattle. A man riding a horse and driving two mules before him occupies the middle distance. These are strongly marked, and stand out in full relief against the soft, low light and extremely remote horizon. The near foreground, a morass, frequented only by ducks, lies in deep shade cast from an overhanging raincloud. The atmosphere looks moist and fresh, and the whole picture very real. Such a prospect Paul Potter would have revelled in, but we question if even he could have painted it more truthfully than A. Mollinger has done. Among other landscapes, we may commend one by W. Koelofs, entitled 'A Dutch Meadow.' The limited space, a mere acre of bright, sparkling grass, is enclosed by dykes and

ditches, with here and there a straggling green willow. A few cows graze in peace within the watery enclosure, beneath a canopy of bright soft clouds. M. Kugtenbroumen has two good specimens of landscape-painting—one rich in the mellow tints of autumn, the trunks of ancient trees covered with silver moss, the glade carpeted with dried fern or strewn with bright crisp leaves.

The old love of Dutch painters for pictures of dead game, flowers, vegetables, and fruit still survives ; and there are in the present collection a number of good pieces of still life, but none equal to the works of Weenix and Van Huysum. There are also a number of candle-light pictures, of which the old school furnished so many instances. Altogether the Dutch gallery may be considered as tolerably interesting. The subjects of the compositions are varied, although chiefly of a domestic order, such as one might expect from a people so circumscribed in their homes, and consequently so domesticated as the people of North Holland necessarily are.

In what has been already said on the pictures in the International Exhibition it has been our desire not to overlook the best examples in the several schools represented. The extraordinary number and variety of pictures of which the united collection is composed must, however, necessarily prevent the complete fulfilment of our wish to do full justice to all. We have so far proceeded with our contemplated task that it only remains for us to notice a few paintings of interest in the schools of Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and Russia.

We could hope that the painters of Italy are very imperfectly represented in the gallery at the Interna-

tional Exhibition, for we are of opinion that Italy's best friends would be puzzled to light upon more than five or six really fine paintings in the gallery, and certainly the collection does not contain more than two first-class pictures. A large work, by Gamba, which hangs near the stairs leading up to the Foreign Picture Galleries, is among the more complete examples present. The treatment which the artist has conferred upon the solemn theme of 'The Funeral of Titian' displays much sensibility and refinement. The dead painter lying in state, and the chief mourners in the grand barge of the centre of the picture are nobly rendered; but the good effect which the artist has obtained in the principal group he has marred by the introduction of horrible details, which are opposed to all propriety. Moreover, the colouring of the picture is unnatural—the colour of the water, in particular, being unlike the colour of any water we have ever seen, under any circumstances. Canaletto never painted his canals of the violet-green here so offensive. The buildings, too, are wax-like in texture, and the whole tone of the picture is sickly and morbid. The figures are all elegant and expressive, in an uncommon degree, and we can imagine Signor Gamba to be a most accomplished draughtsman, with an indifferent feeling for colour, notwithstanding the fact that he has chosen to paint the funeral of the finest colourist who has appeared for a thousand years.

In the same vicinity the visitor will find the historical composition of 'The Expulsion of the Duke of Athens,' painted by Ussi. The painter, doubtless, was led to represent this incident in the just termination of a tyrant's career by an earnest desire to contribute

towards the downfall of that tyranny to which his own native land had so long been doomed. It was a bold lesson on canvas not likely to be appreciated by the Austrians. Apart from its moral value, this contribution of Ussi's is extremely well and powerfully painted, and not unworthy of a place of honour in one of those palaces in which Italy is so rich, and where the Austrian is no longer lord and master. We must not compare the composition of 'The Taking of Jerusalem,' by Francesco Hayez, with the old Florentine masters in design, nor with the old Venetians in colour; but it is just to admit that among the many figures of which the picture is composed a few are marked by forcible and correct action, and some of the groups of women, in particular, who have vainly sought refuge within the precincts of the temple, are eloquently expressive. Again, in the large, and on that account feeble, painting representing 'Charles Emmanuel II. Dying,' Francesco Gonin has shown that he is not far removed from a good painter. The crowd of citizens, who are permitted to enter the chamber of death to take a last farewell of the king, approach the royal presence in an order quite natural, with all that awe and honest sympathy to which the place and the circumstances could not fail to inspire in the people's hearts, and all of which is very touching to see.

In the Roman department there is a picture by Michele Ropissardi, called 'Goethe's Margaret,' which is tenderly painted and sweetly expressive; and there is also the portrait of a peasant girl by G. Müller which is delightfully picturesque. Domenico Morelli's picture of 'The Iconoclasts' has been much talked of, and it certainly possesses power, but is at the same time inclined

to coarseness. The soldiers have broken into a church, and are represented in the act of destroying the handiwork of an early painter. This is a subject calculated to inspire a young limner to achieve a high degree of excellence, but we cannot admit such a result to have been obtained in the present instance. Still the drapery and limbs of the Vandals are broadly and boldly cast and moulded, and the general features of the picture are of a kind which betoken no ordinary mastery over the technical department of painting. True, the colour is wanting in tenderness, being over-positive and therefore oppressive to the eye; yet, with some faults, 'The Iconoclasts,' by Morelli, is a promising work.

A talented small picture, in a corner near the ground, by Alessandro Lanfredini, depicts Passignano, the painter, when a boy, in the shop of his master, a book-binder, sketching the cat instead of folding the letterpress. We could have welcomed more of this class of pictures. Of the portraits there is little to be said. One of King Victor Emmanuel is tolerably painted. One of Count Cavour is only of interest on account of the subject. Among the few landscapes there is a large misty morning scene, by Massimo d'Azeglio, in which the painter has striven to combine the brilliancy of Berghem with the soft radiance of Claude, and failed.

One can but admire the facility with which Italian artists generally draw heads, Academy figures, drapery, and the like, but it would seem as if they had well-nigh lost the ability for combining these component parts into soul-stirring pictures. If we had never witnessed any other proof than is contained in the present Exhibition we should have still concluded that fortune had

been very prodigal of her gifts to the Italians, that Nature had done everything possible for Italy, but that she had done little for herself. Contradictory, however, as it may appear, pictures from Italy manifest little study, original thought, or purpose of any kind. It would seem as if the painters of Italy had lived upon their great old masters long enough to extinguish their own individuality. They cast everything in the same moulds as their ancient exemplars, so that with them painting has become a thing of rule and mechanical in its nature to utter monotony. Actual copies are to be preferred to the mongrel class of goods made up from old pictures artfully disguised. America and England annually import thousands of copies from Italy, and by this means many mediocre painters and students in Rome and Florence are enabled to live. These copyists are men of few pretensions, whose names are seldom pronounced, and it is unnecessary for us to object to their patient plodding mode of earning a scudi in a couple of days; but it is otherwise with the professors who hang up large canvases, and who possess interest and patronage in plenty.

Yet it is useless to say aught on the subjects of Art to the Italians, who are, beyond question, the best critics in the world, and notoriously addicted to fault-finding. Indeed the painters themselves indulge so freely in verbal criticism, and have so much to say about pictures that they barely leave themselves time to paint any. The perfect teaching which they receive in early youth qualifies them as they grow older to discourse eloquently on a theme so luxurious and so favourable to a display of eloquence as the fine arts. But, *Corpo di Bacco!* what

we have to object to is that they talk when they should paint. Let not Italy despair, she has already taught civilisation and refinement to half Europe. Nature has decreed to her the highest place among nations, and she shall yet again inhabit the palaces she has built, and again possess those noble monuments of genius which her forefathers created, and which only Italians could have created, and which only Italians have any claim to possess.

Two pictures in the Austrian Gallery, by Ferdinand Waldmüller, are in some respects equal to the best works of our own painter, Mulready—the subjects, like the chief of that painter's, being of a homely kind. In a work called 'The Apprentice's Reception,' the artist has proved himself a most successful student of mankind, and a kind-hearted man who can feel for the poor. A country woman has just arrived at a cooper's shop. For a long time past it has been her one thought, sleeping and waking, to give her first-born a trade. She has stinted herself in all manner of ways to accomplish this desirable object. Well, the eventful day has arrived. The journey to town is performed on foot. Mother and son enter the house of the keen-witted man of tubs and casks, weary and footsore, for the way was long, and the journey performed barefooted. What a reception do they meet with! The mechanic, whose confident air and well-fed children inform us that he is a thriving man who has saved his few hundreds, puts the country boy through his paces. His physiognomy undergoes an investigation. He is subjected to many questions of an impertinent kind, in order to test his capacity. Every one present laughs at the master's wit, except the country

boy; he alone sees nothing to laugh at; the very infant laughs because the others laugh, but the apprentice has lost his tongue. Poor boy, who that has gone through the same ordeal does not feel for thee? Thou sleptst not last night we will be bound for it. Thou hast thought much of the change to take place in thy young life. Thou hast given up green fields for ever to toil in the stranger's service for thy bread. His secrets thou shalt truly keep, and protect his interest by night and by day, and obey his lawful commands without murmuring. Such is the language of thy indenture. In return he will teach thee a good trade; so take heart; the seven years will soon be past, and then thou wilt be thine own master, and, maybe, possess a shop of thine own. The picture, which contains numerous figures, is remarkable for its truthful delineation of character, and for a thorough knowledge of the class of people represented. The colour also is good.

The second picture by Waldmüller is equally able and even more pleasing. It is 'Christmas Eve' in a thriving mechanic's home, where the children are more than usually abundant. The custom for little boys and girls to place their shoes outside on the window sill just before retiring to bed is being put in practice, and it is so arranged that those children who have been good will discover that some kind hand has put an acceptable present into their shoes, and, on the contrary, the shoes of boys and girls of ill repute will be unnoticed; no rosy apples, toys, and ribbons will be placed for them. It is amusing to watch the effect of pleasure and disappointment expressed on the respective faces of the little ones. There appears to be only one bad boy in the

household, who, utterly chapfallen, stares into the vacant boot. Happily conceived, too, is the sympathising countenance of his fortunate sister, who clearly will not object to dividing her good fortune with the scrapegance of the family. Waldmüller is a perfect master of child life, and his pictures are among the most refined and pleasing domestic portraiture that we can call to mind. Next in delicacy of feeling we should rank Ludwig Neustatter's little picture of two orphan girls seated in an antique room among old cabinets and family relics, contemplating a portrait. Few pictures in the entire collection possess more real refinement than this, and its execution is in harmony with the beauty and chaste spirit of its conception.

Portraits of people of rank are much sought after, and therefore we may remark that the gallery is honoured by the presence of a portrait by Edouard Ender of the present Emperor of Austria in his coronation robes. The face has little expression, and what little it has is chiefly absorbed in the splendour, the crimson and gold, of the imperial trappings. Much more agreeable and expressive is the delicately soft and glowing portrait of the Empress of Austria, by Fr. Schrotzberg. This is a refined and pleasant countenance, to which the artist has done justice.

In the Spanish gallery is a large composition which has created a great sensation during the entire season, and that partly by reason of the fearful nature of the subject depicted, and partly because the painter had no small amount of genius of a dramatic order, and a firm pencil to boldly realise his conceptions of the truly horrible. We need hardly say that we refer to Antonio

Gisbert's picture representing 'The Execution of Padilla, Bravo, and Maldonado.' Juan Bravo has already fallen beneath the axe. Padilla, who stands next in order, steals a moment from the ghostly father who attends him to pay a last tribute of respect to his dead friend. 'Lie there, thou true gentleman!' he exclaims, and then prepares for his own fate with fortitude. It may be worth while to show to the world how nobly patriots can die, but we much question the propriety or the taste of some of the pictures of martyrdom in the Exhibition to which we have had occasion to refer. 'Nero, after the Burning of Rome,' by Piloty, and 'The Counts Egmont and Horn,' by Gallait, are in their way sufficiently effective; but their influence is as nothing when compared to the thrilling effect produced by the scaffold scene of the Spanish painter. Fuseli drew a just distinction between terrors and horrors. The latter he recommends the painter to avoid. Rembrandt—who, apart from his mighty genius for light and shadow, truth of colour and expression, is often revolting—is said, in a picture we have never seen, and never wish to see, to have represented the Philistines gouging out Samson's eyes. Martyrdoms, by Rubens, and, above all, by Spagnoletto, exist, which are not fit to look upon. Plays have been banished from the stage because people will not look upon the image of man mutilated. But we might excuse old horrors: our objection is against a fresh importation of them. Apart from the propriety of the subject and its treatment in matters of detail, few pictures possess, we believe, more force than this one of Gisbert's 'Execution Scene.' The condemned, the priests, and executioners, stand out with life-like distinctness against the

soft hazy sky and remote buildings; and we observe also that every portion of the composition is carefully, closely, and correctly modelled. The forms and bearing of Padilla and Maldonado are, moreover, manly and noble to a high degree, and calculated to inspire moral courage in a beholder who has none. This was, we believe, the point chiefly aimed at by the painter.

Spain is essentially a tragical nation, and on that account her painters must be permitted some licence. The people who delight in bull-fights will bear more than a people who have legislated against all such sanguinary pastimes. One of the most dismal pictures we have ever beheld is the same painter's 'Death of Don Carlos (son of Philip II.)' This work, too, is marked by strong expression. The dim lurid light shed by wax tapers over the apartment serves to add to the intensity of the woe manifested by those assembled round the bed of the dying prince. Eduardo Cano, as a painter of tragedy, will not bear comparison with Antonio Gisbert, as we perceive by his large work now present at the International Exhibition, representing 'The Execution of D. Alvarado de Luna.' Victor Manzano, in his smaller work, called 'Farewell for Ever'—depicting an interview between a cavalier and a nun at a convent grating—is an instance of fine painting, and a proof that Spain still possesses a painter who has a touch and power of handling the pencil which calls to mind the works of Spain's greatest master, Velasquez. Among the minor subjects is a fine interior, 'A View of the Transept, Cathedral of Toledo,' by Pablo Gonzalvo; and some fruit and flower pieces by Meusaque and Mirabent. The chief of the pictures treat of gloomy themes, and

are, therefore, gloomy; but even in subjects which might have admitted of sunshine and cheerfulness the treatment is the same: the same brown horror spreads itself over all things, penetrates the cloister, and, like the wings of the Angel of Death, overshadows mountain and valley, covering the land as with a funeral pall.

It remains for us to notice a few pictures in the schools of Switzerland and Russia. We remarked that in the majority of instances in the German Gallery the pictures had been contributed by the artists themselves, leaving it open to the supposition that the pictures so contributed were unsold works, and, therefore, in all probability not favourable examples of the several authors. Such might be the fact, but the evidence is not conclusive. It is possible that in every instance in which the painter is named as the contributor, a non-professional owner has been kept in the background. Such, however, is not the case with the Russian collection. There nearly every example is lent by one or other distinguished personage in the Russian empire, thus leaving no doubt but that the ablest painters are represented in the International Exhibition by their best productions. Such being the fact, we take the liberty to observe that bad are the best. It would have been more agreeable if conscientiously we could have said the reverse. We feel under great obligations to people living in the far-off regions of the earth for their putting themselves to the trouble of sending contributions with the desire of increasing the interest of our Exhibition, and we would not willingly meet an act of courtesy in a spirit which might be mistaken for ingratitude. In most schools we trace a gradual progress, a growth from crude, early efforts of

symbolical, historical, and religious, to the most perfect and capable creations of the pencil. Not so in the Russian collection. The periods of birth and progress are wholly unmarked. There is neither beginning nor end, but only a chaos of crudeness, of unsuccessful attempts to design and colour. In lieu of pictures of a national character, we have for the most part works without purpose and without sentiment, blind efforts illustrative of the fact that up to the present time no artist has appeared in the great Empire of the North capable of awakening an interest among the nations of the earth, equal to sustain a conflict after fame with the artists of more genial climes. Apart from these remarks upon the general features of the Russian pictures, the visitor may find a few novelties in the North-West Gallery, as in 'A Village Wedding Train,' by Nicholas Swertchkof; a very clever picture of 'Sheep Caught in a Storm,' by John Aivazofsky; and also in the same painter's 'Carters of New Russia.' For a curious example of the manners and customs of native soldiers, there is much to interest in the picture by Basil Tymm, representing 'Heavy Artillery being moved over Mount Toortchy-Dag, in Dagestan.' While for an instance of an ambitious attempt to depict the violent passions, we may point to the 'Wallenstein in Bohemia,' by Leonard Straslimsky. A few of the portraits may also attract by their novelty of costume; in other respects they are far from noteworthy.

There are some attractive pictures in the collection from Switzerland. One called 'Die Sennerin am Hasli-burg,' by Ernest Stükelburg, is very pleasing. Two life-size figures, a full-grown maiden leading her little

sister by the hand down a sloping valley between overhanging trees and rocks ; two beautiful girls, sisters, in the elegant and novel costume of the place, charming in itself ; and apart from this mere picturesqueness, we plainly perceive that these children may be taken as true representatives of the Alpine race. The picture wears an air of truth, an individuality, a local colouring, which is delightful to behold. We should never tire of pictures of this kind.

The collection contains, as a matter of course, some able transcripts of Alpine scenery. Among others, one called 'Souvenirs of the Alps,' by Albert de Meuron : a winter piece, in which the cattle and the peasants, stacks of firewood, and pretty cottage in the foreground, have a most pleasing effect, standing out in strong relief against the snow-covered mountain beyond. Again, we have grand pictures of the Alps by Charles Humbert. The principal work depicts 'Cattle on the Pastures in the Bernese Alps.' This picture is remarkable for a strong and peculiar effect of silvery light, which breaks through the opening clouds, and descends in almost blending splendour on a streamlet where cows and horses are assembled ; beyond, the valley is clothed with pine trees half obscured by vapours which the feeble sun has been unable to disperse ; above, clothed in white, the sublime pyramid of nature penetrates the clouds and pierces the skies.

Our opinion of some of the collections of pictures which form the united collection of the International Exhibition is, that they do not do justice to the nations represented. In the case of England alone, time and space and opportunity were afforded for a display at once grand and imposing. France, next in importance

and in opportunities, figures with effect. Belgium follows in maintaining a noble position in the great display of talent and genius; nor must we forget Denmark and Sweden, than whose pictures of home life none will linger longer in the memory. If the nations are not better represented, or so well as they might have been, the reason is not difficult to discover. The dangers attending the packing and transit of works of art are much greater than is generally supposed; and we cannot altogether call that feeling one of selfishness which compels the collector to hug his pictures to himself, as though their presence and their safety were necessary to his very existence. A man may buy a picture because he loves it, and not always as a mere speculation, but in either case it is his constant care to protect it from harm. Unsightly blanks have been made in many a home of refinement and public gallery in order to fill the monster saloons at Kensington, and if all the masterpieces in Europe have not been sent, we must not forget to return thanks for those which have come to hand; we must not forget those who were not unmindful of what was due in courtesy to ourselves, what was due to the artists who created their art treasure, and to the countries to whom those artists and their works are the pride. Wandering down those spacious galleries, how little do we take to heart or trouble ourselves in any way about that vast multitude of skilled workers who have striven often, even unto death, to impress upon canvas or in stone their own visions of beauty, and who, children of nature as they are, wait longing for the recognition and sympathy of their fellow-men, even as the parched earth longs for the gentle rain. It would be to the shame of that London

journal of which it could truly be urged that it had not done its share in the great labour of securing publicity to the works of talent and genius of which our Great Exhibition is composed. And here something might be said for the critic. We know full well that all attempts by any one journal to do full justice to an undertaking so vast must have failed; but we trust, and not without reason, that the united efforts of many pens have abundantly feasted Fame's 'millions of open mouths,' and that worth hitherto neglected has in many instances, through the aid of the press, received its deserts; and that established names have become more honoured by becoming better known.

For years past it has been observed that the public take hardly any interest in Sculpture. The picture-rooms at the Royal Academy are always crowded, the place where the sculpture is put always empty, and this we think almost a sufficient reason for asserting that the people prefer pictures to statues, paint to marble. Nor is this indifference to art in stone merely owing to the absence of colour: rather might we not trace the unpopularity to the utter absence of invention or novelty of any kind as the cause which for years has made the Sculpture Gallery a failure? Had the Royal Academy trusted to its sculptors for attractions, it is quite clear that that institution would not at this time have invested in good securities the large sum of 122,600*l*. We might lay down the dictum without much fear of opposition, that a sculptor should be a man addicted to the contemplation of the human form in all its varieties and manifold modes of expressing thought by look and gesture. A sculptor walks not the street in hot haste to

keep appointments with clients, to do strokes of business on 'Change. On the contrary, he lingers about lanes and alleys, possibly more among the lower classes of mankind than the rich, to make observations, to jot down anything striking and novel or picturesque which may look well in stone. The poor charwoman returning from labour at nightfall to the noisome court, snatches her neglected infant to her breast and gazes into its face, and eyes it with eagerness, and possibly if she be young, not without some gracefulness in her bearing, and certainly much energy of action. She has a thousand ways of expressing her love, and all of them proper for the artist to study, model, and carve, with very slight alterations in the make-up. Some men, however, are not content with things as they find them; and while they go to Nature for ideas, they rush to the antique for inspiration, and the result is, that instead of the woman hugging baby in the court, we have a Venus of faultless shape and mien caressing Cupid. The same action, the same energy, the same fond expression of the eyes; only the rags, the squalor, the vulgarity have given way to smooth, well-turned polished limbs, and handsome face and braided hair. We have no objection to the artist who is content with what he finds, or to him who transforms the real into the ideal: we only ask of both that the Nature whom we all know and love shall be their guide—that they shall not in all their works invent impossible things. We will not take an imitation of green baize for a smiling meadow, at the hands of a landscape painter, and we will not receive equally absurd substitutes for the human form from the sculptor. The Greek sculptors, who devoted their chisels to the gods, designed all their forms

from human models, and for the matter of the ideal they had far less reason to draw upon the imagination than the moderns, for we may infer from the remarks of some ancient authors that the handsomest men among the Greeks were superior in grace and dignity to the finest statues; and we well know how exact in proportion and how full of character and expression those ancient statues referred to must have been, for we still possess some of the finest examples. It is admitted that in all matters of detail, of fact, the antique in its wildest flights is strictly natural and never offends probability. But the sculptor has much to learn before he can hope to render in marble that which he sees, and, above all, that which he conceives and feels. The old man's gait differs from the boy's, and the mature woman moves in a manner quite unlike to the damsel in her teens. Moreover, proportions vary with age and development. Yet all those variations and differences have been noticed and recorded by the great masters of old for the benefit of the student of to-day. There is nothing to be done without nature, and yet we feel that the bulk of our statues, namely, those which make up the annual Exhibitions, and those which are put up in our streets, are produced without any particular reference to nature, and the consequence is that they excite neither surprise nor emotion; and this is quite right: seeing that they appear 'neither to act nor think' themselves, it would be strange if they created much excitement in their beholders. Nobody will charge us with a too great partiality for our painters. We are too jealous of the national honour to rest satisfied with the works of living painters. We know that in an annual exhibition in Trafalgar Square

few pictures manifest signs of real genius—that there is ever a paucity of works which denote the possession of strong inventive faculties in the painters; yet we do find a novelty on canvas and paper much more frequently than in marble or bronze. We fear that our artists as a body really take things too easy; that they do not study; that, like the poet Thomson, they will not be charged with having a motive for what they do; and that consequently they cannot lay claim to earnestness and to the exercise of influence over their fellow-men. If they master not the knowledge of the sentiments and passions, and apply that knowledge to their respective arts, they can hardly hope to work upon the affections and the intelligence of the crowd. Those artists, more especially sculptors, who would serve mankind, must make man their study and delight at all times: for this they must live, and, if necessary, for this they must die. The most successful delineators of passion and sentiment have laboured hard and long. Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest of the great old masters, never lost an opportunity of seizing upon a strong expression or forcible action; and in all places among the high and the low, he ever had his eyes open and his pencil pointed. No wonder, therefore, if his works delighted and astonished by their beauty, novelty, and force, or, as the case might be, struck terror to the heart of the gazer; for on occasion he would even attend public executions, and ever after, fixed upon the tablet of his brain, lingered those lines of agony and intolerable anguish which played in lines of white and black upon the faces of the condemned. There are Shakespeares in painting and sculpture; but the misfortune is that they are very scarce.

As to whether marble should be tinted or painted, or

retain its natural whiteness, we care not to speak. The main object is that the artist should have a good purpose in view—that when he takes mallet and chisel or pencil in hand he should use them with effect. We want not conventional draperies—forms without life, faces without meaning. We want subjects which we may all feel it worth our while to contemplate, and we want these so treated that once beheld they shall not easily be obliterated from the memory. We need glorious creations of genius, which appeal with equal power alike to the heart and to the head. Forms which are bad no painting will improve, and forms which are noble require no outward tinting; yet to forms which are beautiful or sublime we would begrudge no cost of precious materials. The genius of the artist might be equally apparent in humble potter's earth, but it is better respected when displayed in materials ornate and rare, for things costly have their weight alike in the eyes of the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor. But we repeat that the main object with the sculptor should be to have a good and wise purpose in view—a purpose calculated to awaken all his sympathies, to arouse all his energies. View it in whatever sense we may, the creation of a piece of sculpture is a grave responsibility to those who have the means of patronage. One's heart aches when one reflects on the ordinary kind of commissions which fall to the lot of our sculptors, as exhibited in the conventional busts which crowd the shelves at the annual show in Trafalgar Square, and in the military memorials which disfigure our streets.

The creation of a piece of sculpture is a grave responsibility also to the sculptor, because of the great expense necessarily involved in its creation. Wages

of indispensable assistants, purchase of marble, and lastly the lengthened period necessarily consumed in the perfection of a serious work, are considerations sufficient to deter the ablest men from undertakings, which, failing of ultimate success, in a pecuniary sense, would necessarily involve the worker in liabilities, bankruptcy, and despair. He appeals to the public for support, and is thought fortunate if he is permitted to build up an effigy of the last successful general, to add one more to the already too numerous repetitions of martial shapes so familiarly known and chiefly distinguished by the regulation cloak, ponderous sword, or cocked hat and *bâton*, as the case may be. Even allowing that a nation's honour and glory are confided only to the keeping of soldiers, and that no others saving military servants have any claim to public distinctions, are there no incidents associated with the battle-field which deserve recognition, and honourable recognition, at the hands of the State? Noble qualities are often displayed amidst the calamities of war which might claim that distinction which genius can give. Deeds are performed in hours of strife and horror which deserve to be engraven by the most delicate of chisels on the whitest of marbles; deeds often performed by lowly heroes to whom sculptural honours are never paid—virtues like those of your Florence Nightingales, for whom monuments in marble and bronze are never contemplated.

A STORY OF A FLOWER

A STORY OF A FLOWER.

IT is impossible to describe the delight which I took in my first flower ; yet it was only a poor, pecky little sprouting crocus.

Before I begin the story, I must in two lines make known my needy state at the time when I became the owner of the flower. I was in my eleventh year, meanly clothed, plainly fed, and penniless : an errand-boy, in receipt of one shilling and sixpence a week, which sum I consumed in bread and shoe-leather. Yet I was happy enough, living in a snug cottage in the suburbs of Oxford, within sight of its towers, and within hearing of its bells. In the back yard of my home were many wonders. The gable end of a barn was mantled with ivy centuries old, and sparrows made their home in its leafage ; an ancient wall, old as the Norman tower at the other end of the town, was rich in gilly-flowers ; a wooden shed with red tiles was covered by a thriving 'tea-tree'—so we called it—which in summer was all blossom, pendent, mauve-coloured blossoms. This tree managed to interlace its branches among the tiles so effectively as in the end to lift off the whole roof in a mass, and poise it in the air. Bees came in swarms to sip honey at the blossoms. I noted civilised hive bees and large ones whose waxen cells were hidden in mossy banks in the woods ; these had crimson and saffron

tinted bodies, or, for variety, hairy shapes of sombre green and black. I was never weary of my wall-flowers, and trees, and butterflies. But, so it is—I happened one day to get a glimpse of a college garden about the end of February or the beginning of March, when its mound of venerable elms was lit up with star-like yellow flowers. The dark earth was robed as with a bright garment of imperial oriental splendour. It was the star-shaped aconite, as I believe, but I am not sure whose existence in flower is brief but glorious when beheld as I beheld it in masses. Henceforth, if Old Fidget, the gardener, was not at the back gate of St. J——, I peeped through the keyhole at my yellow garden bed, which seemed flooded with sunlight, only broken by patches of rich black earth, which formed strange patterns, such as we see on Japanese screens of lacquer and bronze, only that the flowers had a glory of their own. Well, I looked through the keyhole every time I passed, and that was four times daily, and always with increased interest, for my flowering aconite. But, oh! trouble upon trouble, one day I found the keyhole stopped, and there was an end of my daily joy and of the interest which had awakened in me in a new way for the wonders of nature. My love of flowers, however, increased, and I found means to feed my love.

I had often observed Old Fidget, the head gardener, and his mates bring out wheelbarrow-loads of refuse from the shrubbery and flower-beds, and throw them in a heap along the garden wall without, where a long deep trench had become the well-known receptacle for rubbish. Such places were common in town suburbs in those days. The rubbish consisted of cuttings of shrubs and

plants and rakings of flower-borders, but more bountifully of elm leaves and the cast-off clothing of chestnut-trees, which soon lay rotting in flaky masses, until I happened to espy a fragment of a bulb, and then the rubbish of the garden, which concealed sprouting chestnuts, knew no rest. I went one holiday and dug deep, with no other implement than my hands, into this matted mass. I laboured till at length, in a mass of closely pressed leaves, I came upon a perfect crocus. It lay like a dead elfin infant in its forest grave. I was enchanted and afraid to touch it, as one would fear to commit a piece of sacrilege. It lay in its green robes, which seemed spun from dainty silken threads, unsoiled by mortal hands. Its blossom of pale flesh-tint lay concealed within a creamy opalescent film, which seemed to revive and live when light penetrated the darksome tomb, contrasting with the emerald robes and silken, pliant roots. At length I lifted the flower from its bed, and carried it to my garden-plot with breathless care. My garden-plot, not much larger than a baking-dish, was enclosed by broken tiles—a scrubby place, unsuited to my newly discovered treasure. I broke up the earth and pulverised it with my fingers; but its coarseness was incurable. I abandoned it as I thought of some mole-hills in a neighbouring copse, and soon my plot was filled deeply with soft, sandy soil, fit for my flower. And then came the necessity of protecting it from the searching March winds, which I did effectually by covering it with a flower-pot, and the season wore on, and soft mild days set in apace, and my flower, which was ever uppermost in my thoughts, whether sleeping or waking, began to show signs of life as day by day I

permitted the sun to look at it, until at length, one sunny, silent Sunday morning, it opened its golden, glowing sacramental cup, gleaming like light from heaven, dropped in a dark place, living light and fire. So it seemed to my poor vision, and I called the household and the neighbours from their cares to share my rapture. But alas! my dream was ended; the flower had no fascination for those who came at my call. It was but a yellow crocus to them; some laughed, some tittered, some jeered me, and old Dick Willis, poor man, who got a crust by selling soft water by the pail, he only rubbed his dim eyes, and exclaimed in pity, 'God bless the poor boy!'

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